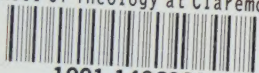


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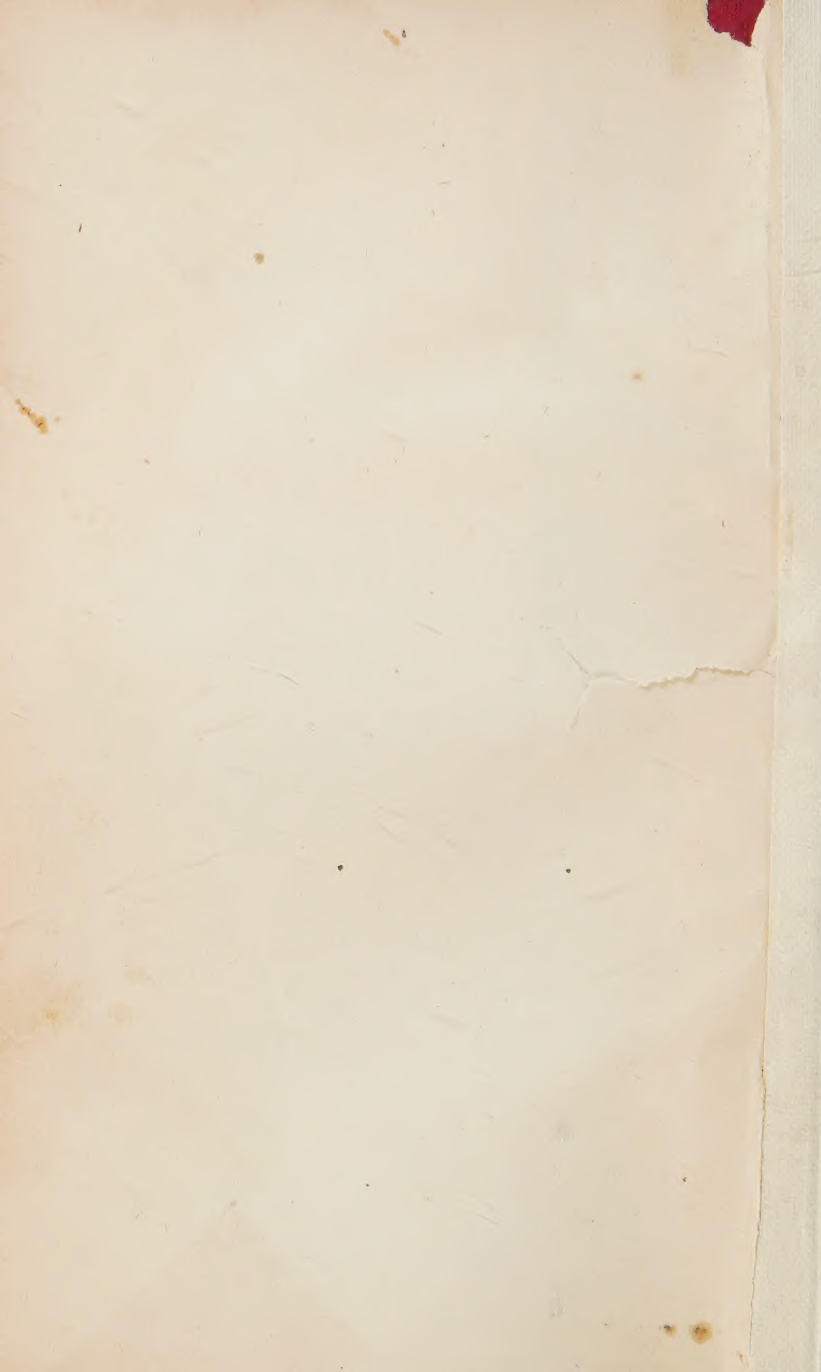


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SERMONS

PREACHED BY

WILLIAM H. H. MURRAY.



BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
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1871.

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SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 5, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—THE DUTY OF IMPROVING THE MEANS OF GRACE.

“LOOKING DILIGENTLY, LEST ANY MAN FAIL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.”
Heb. xii. 15.

THIS passage, in its original application, refers especially to the converted, but may with equal clearness and pungency be addressed to all who stand in moral relations to God. I shall consider it in its widest significance, and make it a basis and starting-point, from which I shall urge upon all of you, and especially such of you as have not as yet a hope in Christ, the duty of leaving nothing undone whereby the hope may be obtained. I feel that many of you are peculiarly situated. You are in that border-land which lies between worldliness and spirituality, in doubt whether to advance or go back. You are not as bad as you have been, nor as good as you should be; and I wish this morning to call your attention to certain considerations why you should not remain where you are. I hope to make it appear to some of you that you should go on until you have come to a full and perfect Christian state.

1. There is a certain class of men who come to

the surface, and advertise themselves in every revival period; who say, "Why need I go to a prayer-meeting? Can't I read my Bible, and feel my guilt, and ask for pardon, just as well at home as in the vestry of the church? The one place is just the same as the other." And in this way they put aside kindly-meant invitation and solicitude in their behalf.

Now, I desire to say a few words to you in this congregation who belong to this class, and to that greater number outside of this audience to whom, in the providence of God, these words may come, who use the same excuse to stave off the Christian importunity of those who are anxious in respect to the welfare of your souls. Does it not seem, at times, queer to you, that people who are too sensible for you to imagine insane should be more anxious about your welfare than you are yourselves?

Now, then, I ask you, friend, if the prayer-meeting is the same as your home, why do you refuse so persistently to go to it? Why do you so dislike the place of confession and prayer and exhortation? Why do you dodge and avoid a place which is the same as your home? Why do you put ingenuity upon the rack to invent excuses for not going? What is the cause of that uneasiness which disturbs you as the prayer-meeting night draws near? Why do you dislike to have your wife or mother or sister or friend ask if you will not go to meeting with her to-night?

My friend, do not deceive yourself; do not flatter yourself that you can deceive God's people.

They have all passed through the same shameful and bitter experience. They all avoided the Spirit once, and strove to stop their ears to the invitation of peace, as you are now doing. They all resisted the means of grace, and came out of the power and dominion of sin tardily, and only as pushed along by the strong-handed mercy of Christ. We all know your feelings, therefore; for they have been our own. We know, for our eyes have been opened so that we see, the cause and motive of your disinclination. You do not desire to go to the prayer-meeting, because it is a *prayer-meeting*. You know and feel that there is a difference between that room of prayer and your own house, and that is why you stay at your own house. Why not be honest (pardon me if I seem to rudely impeach your motives),—why not be honest, I repeat, and frankly say, “I *dare* not go to the prayer-meeting: the tide sets all one way there; and, if I should put myself into it, I should be borne along, and compelled, as it were, to become a Christian; and I am not ready to become a Christian yet”? I do not say that you shall go to the place of prayer; I do not say that you shall be converted: you are master of your own movements. I would not place the weight of a finger upon the sceptre of your independence. What the Spirit may not do, it is not for man to attempt; but I do insist that you shall deal honestly with the Holy Ghost. You can say, “No, I won’t be converted,” if you will; but I insist that you shall say it directly to his face, and in just so many words.

Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel so as to uncover all your excuses, so as to reveal the wickedness of the crouching motive that fears to show itself, and cause every act of your mind to stand forth, perceived of yourself and others, in the clear light of a deliberation intelligent and decided as it is wicked!

In further explanation and enforcement of this point (for some of you may not realize the reason and philosophy of the means of grace), I suggest, —

2. That the mind is subject to motives. Every decision has a parental cause back of it. Every resolution is in the line of sequence. Something has preceded. It had a bulbous state before it flowered out. The mind decides from the same reason that a stone mounts into the air: it is impelled upward to the point of decision by a power acting underneath it. No man becomes a Christian, no person changes the order of his life for the better, because compelled by the arbitrary exercise of God's power. God deals with souls very like as he deals with flowers. He puts a pressure but no violence upon them. His touch is the touch of gentleness. He comes to a tree, and sifts his dews all over it. He does this night after night, until every bud is moist, and a half disposition to yield has come to the hard edges of the outer leaves. Then come the rays of the sun with their sweet enticements, — a lover for every bud, — and they say, each to his own, "Open unto me, my beloved, my undefiled." And after a little time of delay, as if every flower would be true to the modesty of

Nature, they all open ; and the orchard is bright with the beauty of their faces, and rich with the fragrance of their breath. And it is just so in the kingdom of grace. While God puts no violence, he does put a pressure upon its subjects, strong as it is sweet. We are not compelled, we are inclined ; we are not dragged, we are enticed ; we are not driven, we are persuaded ; and there are times and places when and where these gracious influences are felt more strongly than at others. There is a spot on my farm — a hillside, with a southern exposure — where I shall plant my orchard and my berries and my flowers, because the sun greets it with its earliest ray, and lights it with its retiring beam. And I hope some day to sit in my porch, and have the mingling perfumes of all that slope borne up on the current of the warm south to my nostrils. And so in the wide ranges of God's husbandry, where are soils and climate for every possible virtue, there are favorable localities and southern exposures to the Spirit, where every thing blossoms earliest in youth, and where the Indian summer of Christian experience lingers longest in the changeful atmosphere. And this law is no more peculiar to the realm of the soul than to the realm of the mind. Why should a child attend school ? Why build colleges ? Why collect libraries ? Why group the paintings and models of the great artists of the world ? Why cannot your child be as well taught, why cannot his judgment in matters of art become as discriminating, his taste as refined, at home, as in these places so ostentatiously

set apart for his service? Because, I respond (and you all anticipate the answer), — because a man is influenced by his surroundings. There is an influence in association, an inspiration in occasion, a power obtained by the collocation and concentration of means and agencies, which the dullest in apprehension must see and acknowledge. The college is dedicated to learning; its walls were reared in the interest of culture; its associations are all classic; and the atmosphere of the place, as we say, is literary. These things are not without their influence upon the student's mind. They quicken and stimulate his ambition; they sustain his noblest aspiration; and in after-years, as he looks backward to his college-days, he discovers that more potent and blessed upon him than all the positive accretions of knowledge was this silent, subtile influence born of the surroundings and spirit of the place.

So it is, friends, with the sanctuary and room of prayer. You who would put yourselves in the best position for spiritual development, make your regular visitations to each; if you would have knowledge of your sins, go where that knowledge is imparted; if your conscience is dead and inoperant, go where it may be brought in connection with the Spirit, and shocked into life; if you are hardened in your unbelief, and would be melted, go where tears are flowing, and the choked and tremulous voice of confession is heard: in short, if you desire to be saved, go where salvation is being proclaimed and experienced.

You are walking in darkness: let the hand of a

friend lead you to some room that is full of light. You are like a man smitten with leprosy: it has full possession of you; it has attacked the nerves, and taken away your sense of feeling; it has hardened the organ of sight, so that you are blind. You neither feel nor see in what wretchedness and loathsomeness you stand; and you will not believe such as tell you, with tears in their eyes, weeping because of the wretched plight you are in, how terrible is your condition. Go, then, to Him, at the touch of whose finger the scales shall fall from your eyes, and you shall see how vile you are; and not alone that, but, looking again, see your vileness pass away, and you yourself—too happy to laugh, your joy finding expression in your tears—feel that you are standing a *new man* in Christ Jesus.

I desire all of you to whom I am a religious teacher and adviser to understand that the matter of personal goodness is not one of mere preference,—something you can accept or reject, as you please. There is a right and a wrong to it. Now, I feel that all of you desire, on the whole, to do what is right. The Spirit of enlightenment, the Spirit of quickening, has been with you; and you are not insensible to obligation. It has not had its perfect work in you; for you have resisted it in part, and do still resist. But, so far as you have permitted, it has been with and in you, and kept you from fatal indifference. You have been like the briars and brambles in spring-time, whose nature it is to go out in the way of thorns, and yet from which God, through sun

and shower, elicits sweetness. You have been shone upon of his love ; you have been nourished by the dews of his grace ; and a certain floral state and fragrance have come to you, in spite of yourselves as it were. And it should be a matter of keen gratitude with you, as it is of rejoicing to us all, that he has not left you to yourselves ; but enticed you by a sweet persistency toward goodness. He has blessed you, as he often does all his children, beyond what they expected, — beyond what they consciously desired.

Now, I speak to you as those who are able to realize an obligation ; and I say (and I think that you all will agree with me) that you have no right to remain spiritually where you are, if any advance is possible to you. If you would be a better father or mother, or wife or husband, or brother or sister, or friend, by becoming a Christian, then you ought to become such to-day. The question of experience and conduct is not one that is important to you alone. It affects every one whom you affect, — all your clerks, your relatives, your acquaintances, and community at large. The character of a man's life affects thousands beside himself. Wickedness cannot be kept inside a man's own heart. You might as well expect a poisonous flower to keep its poison to itself, when the wind goes over it and wafts its deadly perfume abroad, as to expect to keep the evil thought, and wicked imagination, and inordinate desire, to yourself. There is a social and moral atmosphere ; and men breathe of your impurity, and are

endangered by it. My voice, therefore, only gives utterance to the solemn protest of universal purity against your past and present conduct, when I urge you to become better men and purer women. The embodied virtue of the world speaks through me, exhorting and entreating you to rectify your nature and your courses. I speak not alone for the adults: I speak for those who sleep in cradles to-day, who are to grow up and be influenced by the evil in the world, of which your imperfection and sinfulness compose a part. Steep and flinty enough by Nature's dire appointment will be the path their tender feet must tread: place not a pebble, plant not a thorn, in their path. If we are anxious for your conversion, it is because we are interested in it as sharers of its influence. If we labor so strenuously to lift you, it is, in part, because we feel, that, without you, we ourselves cannot so rapidly mount.

I dare to say that few of you are indifferent to your spiritual condition. You are thoughtful, solemnly so: for the Spirit of God has descended upon you as winds come down upon a forest; and as the trees are swayed, so you are moved and agitated in your minds. And you can truly say, "I am thinking upon this matter a great deal. I think of it every hour in the day; yes, and at night too: when my family think I am sleeping, I lie awake, pondering my spiritual condition." I understand all this, friends; and yet I say frankly to you, that in this lies your greatest peril. I mistrust this prolonged deliberation. My fear is (and I ask you to judge if it be groundless),—my fear is,

that you will do nothing but *think*. Thinking will never save you; it will never fulfil the gospel requirement; it will never make your peace with Jesus; it does not commit you to that step which is alone satisfactory to God, and which you must take or ever his peace will be shed abroad in your hearts. You can bury a seed so deeply in the earth, you can retain it there so long, that it shall decay. The germinal principle in it shall be extinguished, and no life ever come out of it. And so a resolution, no matter how noble, no matter how promising, can be detained so long in the mind as to die out, and never develop into an act; and I fear that this sad experience will be yours. There is a time for debate; a time when to act would be only to blunder ignorantly: but, on the other hand, there is a time, there are seasons, in every one's life, when to debate longer is to sin,—a moment when action alone, prompt and decided action, meets the emergency, and fulfils obligation. Do you understand this, friends? Does this analysis come with the force of conviction to you? Does something within you say, "That's my case"? If so, how, then, can you delay? how hesitate? If so, you are at the very door of opportunity: you have but to open it; you have but to take one step, and you stand in your Father's presence, with the light of his face shining upon you, and his love covering your transgressions like a mantle. Would that I might have a more impressive utterance than the feebleness and coldness of uninspired speech! Would that for one moment, yea, even now and here, to-day,

the “gift of tongues” might be vouchsafed to me, that through my lips might come to you the perfect expression of the highest wisdom ! Then should you be exhorted ; then should there be a propulsion to my words that should push you on ; then should it seem, to you who hesitate, no longer the voice of man, but in very truth the voice of God. Then should mercy stand revealed before you,—not that mercy which is known of men, and whose home is on the earth, but that sweet, that tender, that sublime expression of Jehovah known to the redeemed and pardoned, whose dwelling-place is heaven, and whose home is in the bosom of God ; and you should see it standing here, lacking not voice of warning, lacking not gesture of entreaty, saying unto you in tones to thrill and melt your hearts, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

I know that now and then, when every other excuse fails him ; when Satan can push forward no other defence to a man’s wickedness, — as the last desperate resort against the Spirit, he concentrates the energies of the mind in one bald expression of unbelief and obstinacy ; and the man says in his heart, “It isn’t true. The preacher is mistaken. I am in no such peril as he describes, do what I may. God is too *good* to condemn me.”

My friends, palsied forever be my tongue in that hour when it shall cease to magnify the goodness of God ! My conception of him, like a sun full-orbed and resplendent, rides forever, the heaven of my hope ;

and whether in gladness, or dimmed with the moisture of many tears, I lift my eyes upward, the sky is bright with the outshining of his love. Neither in father nor mother, neither in friend nor lover, can man find a measure for his benevolence. Never may you find a charity, never a patience, never a compassion, like to his. But this makes not your error the less, nor your conclusion less wrong and perilous. Listen, then, while I strive to make this appear to you.

1. In one sense, God does not condemn you: you condemn yourself. Not by the frown of his face shall you be exiled from heaven and him, which terms are one: your own condition shall banish you; your own consciousness of unfitness shall banish you. Though you stood in the streets of heaven, yet should you say, "This place is not for me; my companions are not here;" and, covering your face with the mantle of your remorse, you would fly from the place and companionship you did not deserve, neither were fitted to enjoy. The wretch who stands at night on the corner of your street, clothed in rags, and every rag defiled with dirt, with bloated face and bloodshot eyes, and a tongue familiar with oaths, is not less fitted for the light and refinement and purity of your parlors than you are — standing in your sins, clothed in the garments of your unrighteousness, your minds corrupted with the outgoing of many unseemly imaginations, your habits all earthly — for the clear light of heaven and the company of the blessed. Never shall you know until that hour, noted chiefly for the two revelations it shall make, —

one of the purity of God, the other the impurity of man, — never until you shall stand, I say, in that pure light which forbids all illusions, and compels by its clearness a full knowledge of yourself, will you know how wicked you are. Then shall you indeed see your unfitness ; then will you realize, as no words of mine can make you, the need of the new birth. The silence of God will be the voice of your condemnation, and your own consciousness indorse, even with groanings, the righteousness of the decree.

But, were this not so, still are you in the wrong. The Adversary perverts your theology, that he may still hold you as his captive ; for you surely cannot deny that God is ruler over a kingdom filled with two classes of subjects, — the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient. In this world, as you know, wickedness and wicked men exist : and hence law is a necessity, and, in order that it may protect the good, it must be enforced ; for law unenforced is both a standing dishonor to the law-making power and a laughing-stock to the wicked. And God must therefore enforce his laws against every transgressor of them ; and the impartial enforcement of the law becomes the highest evidence of his goodness. Go down to one of your city courts and test this reasoning. You are interested in this matter ; for you are a citizen here, and your own life and property are at stake. In one court-room you find a weak man as a judge, — not a base judge, perhaps ; not one who will pocket a bribe ; but one in whom there is no keen sense of justice, no judicial uprightness, no proper

realization of his responsibility. The case before the court is one of your own bringing. A man has broken into your store, and robbed you ; or into your house, and violated your wife ; and the whole community has risen up in arms against the man. A feeling of insecurity has spread all over the city ; and men say as they meet in the street, " Who of us is safe ? There was a time once in this city when a man could leave his family under the protection of the public law, and journey off, and do his business abroad, feeling that his wife and children were secure ; but now it seems that none of us are secure. What a civilization is this, when a man must needs be at home every night, pistol in hand, to defend his own dwelling ! " And they say, " This villain must be made an example of, or law will be only a name here, and a by-word among thieves. " But the judge is one of your tender, merciful, good men ; too kind-hearted to punish any one, — just such a being as some of your teachers picture God to be. And he says, " I can't punish this man : I love him. I dare say he will repent if I let him go. " And so he bids the sheriff unclasp the handcuffs, and turns the man loose upon society again. Friends, what would you say of such a judge ? I am not talking theology to you ; I am not striving to convert you to any set of doctrines : I am talking common sense ; I am getting you down to the very roots of the principle of public justice ; and I ask you, What would you Boston men say of such a judge ? Would you call him a *good* judge ? — a judge to be honored ? — a judge to be loved, and kept in office ?

No! You would say, "This is a wicked judge: he is worse than the criminal he wickedly pardoned. If he had been a good judge, he would have interpreted the law to the man's condemnation and our safety. His goodness would have at least made him just. Away with him from the bench he disgraces, and the city, every home in which he has imperilled!"

My friends, are goodness and justice one thing above, and another below, the sky? or are they the same in every world and order of beings throughout the universe of God? You say, "They are one and the same everywhere and unto all." Then I say, in accordance with your own rendering, the very goodness of God will impel him to execute his law against every transgressor, unless some other provision than such as the principles of public justice provide shall be made in the criminal's behalf. A provision has been made, blessed be God! The terms and conditions thereof I have presented to you out of the Scriptures before, and do present them to-day, which you have rejected, and do now, as I understand you, reject; and these, being rejected, *leave you as though no provision had ever been made.* Where, then, do you stand? You stand in the position of transgressors before the law, unprotected by any provision of mercy, with the just and the good of all ages and of every world indignant at you on account of your crime; without God, and without hope in the world. Your present is dark with forebodings, as a landscape upon which has fallen the shadow of coming storm;

and out of the future comes the muttering of concealed but approaching thunder. Fly, then, impenitent man, before the night of death comes and the storm of judgment breaks above you!—fly to the Rock that is higher than thou!

The death of Christ, I charge you to remember, and to believe none who say otherwise, as you value your soul,—the death of Christ was the extreme suggestion of infinite mercy, whereby judgment might not be pronounced upon the criminal, and the honor of the law and the security of the universe at the same time be sustained. There is no unrevealed fountains, friends, lying back of Calvary, yet to be opened, in which the guilty may wash and be cleansed. There is no rock out of which waters may gush, from which creatures dying of thirst may drink, save that which was smitten by a greater than Moses. There is no other name in heaven, or among men, whereby you can be saved, than the name (is there no note of music that I can borrow in which to breathe this name?—a name that should have melody for its expression, and the harmony of heaven for its praise)—the name of my Redeemer and my Lord. Come, then, to God, with this name upon your lips. Come in your hesitation, come in your trembling, come in your guilt, come even in your despair, and ask freely; for it is written, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will he give unto you.”

And now, friends and strangers, as I draw to the

conclusion, I strive after some parting utterance that shall fitly express the solemnity of this hour. I have striven to speak with the simplicity and directness of a man who realizes the grave consequences of human conduct. Ahead of us all is the future; and to us, who are gifted with immortality, it is an endless future. I know that time will fail; that the days will die, and have an end; that the earth will cease its revolutions; and the seasons, because of their age, expire: but we shall not fail, and the souls that are within us will not cease to live. The earth on which we are, and the heavens above us, will pass; but we shall not pass. Even the bodies we inhabit will return to their native elements; ashes shall be mingled with ashes, and dust with dust: but we, like birds that fly upward and abroad when the bars of their cages part, shall stand unharmed when our bodies dissolve, and our existence will be continual. Sitting as you are under the shadow of that eternity which looms in vast projection above your heads, feeling as I do that some of you may be near your graves and the supreme crisis of your lives, I ask you to tell me what is your spiritual position. Upon what are you settled? What hope have you to give strength and consolation in your dying hour? I press you with no arguments; I make no appeal. Faculties and powers are yours sufficient for the investigation, ample for decision. If you have not decided; if you still linger in a state of hesitation, of dangerous lethargy, or wicked indifference, — I do my duty in warning you

against further delay. Avoid it as your deadliest foe. Your consciences speak through my voice, and re-echo my admonition. Sink the line of investigation into the waters to-day. Touch bottom somewhere. Drift no longer on an unsounded current down which so many before you have floated to ruin, and the shores of which are lined with the upheaved fragments of many and recent wrecks.

The day has brought you a new and beautiful possibility. It has delivered you from your business and your daily cares. It has graciously separated you from those worldly pursuits which forbid the leisure needed for solemn thought. It has introduced you to scenes peculiarly favorable to religious reflection. Its memories and its emotions throng to your aid. Heaven itself, descending in the privileges of this closing moment, opens its gates for your entrance; and the solicitude of its saints and its angels, yes, and the desire of the Saviour himself, speaking through my lips, sends out the solemn interrogation, "Will you *enter*?"

Suspend your answer until you hear me. By that past behind you, by its sacred memories, by the graves where your pious ancestry sleep, by the remembrance of faces now passed into glory, by the bitter recollections of your sins from which you can never deliver yourselves, by the brevity of your lives hastening to their close, by your fear of death, by your hope of heaven, and by whatever other invocation unknown to me, and which, by being uttered,

might influence you for good, I entreat you, one and all, to drop your rebellion against God, and be at peace with him. The moment is heavy with the burden of your decision. Have you decided? If so, *how?*

SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 12, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—GOD'S FEELINGS TOWARD MAN.

“BUT WHEN HE WAS A GREAT WAY OFF HIS FATHER SAW HIM, AND HAD COMPASSION, AND RAN, AND FELL ON HIS NECK, AND KISSED HIM.” — Luke xv. 20.

THE parable from which the text is selected has as one of its objects to show the feelings of God toward men, and especially when they come in penitence to him. It is a very remarkable passage; perhaps, all things considered, the most remarkable in the whole Bible. It seems incredible that any one can read it and not be moved. How any impenitent person can read it, and remain impenitent, is a marvel. How can a man go on sinning against such a Being as Christ in this passage teaches that God is? What a thing sin must be if it can harden the heart against so sweet a picture of the divine character as is spread before us in this chapter!


In application of the truths taught in this parable, I observe, —

1. That it presents the sinner in several states of feeling; the first of which is, wicked uneasiness under divine restraint.

You must follow the narrative on carefully, step by step, you must pause and examine every group in this wonderful picture of human experience, if you would feel the full impression produced by the whole.

Here, in the first place, is a young man blessed with the kindest of fathers and the best of homes. Every thing that ambition could desire is his. Wealth serves him, and love ministers unto his every want. In respect to the present, his cup runneth over; touching the future, his prospects are all bright: still he is uneasy. Some people never can be satisfied. He has freedom; but he desires license. The bad elements of his nature have gained the ascendancy. He wearies of home. It is too well-ordered, too pure. He chafes under its salutary control. Sinful cravings make him heady. He determines to break away from his home. Humored to the last, the property is divided, — a full half put into his hands; and, with his heart steeled against every motive of honor, gratitude, and affection, heedless of counsel, and deaf to entreaty, he casts moral restraint to the winds, and plunges into sinful indulgence.

There, friends, you have the first picture, — the exact portrait of scores all about us. Society is full of men impatient of all moral restraint, indifferent to duty, dead in conscience. In this state of mind and heart is embedded the germ of all possible wickedness. A person who deems moral obligation tyranny, who practically ignores every injunction of



the ten commandments so far as he dares, who stops at nothing but the fear of punishment, who takes counsel only with the lower and animal instincts of his nature, is a person already far along the road to ruin. Such a disposition is the natural soil of poisons. Nothing fragrant, nothing fruitful of good, will ever come out of it. This city is full to-day of just such young men. They are squandering their character as a spendthrift does money, — throwing it away. They are racing down to ruin : they vie with each other in their attempts to outdo one another in wickedness. They seem proud of their folly. They have literally left their father's house, and abide with strangers. They are careless of every thing that is truly worthy in life, or noble in destiny. They convert, by their evil conduct, the blessing of time into a curse. They arise in the morning worse than when they lay down at night ; they lie down at night worse than when they arose in the morning.

2. The second picture presented in the parable is of a man given over to sin. Sin is no longer an imagination, but an experience. He no longer dreams of it : he lives in it. His mouth is filled with the water of bitterness, and he loves the taste. His thoughts, his conduct, his impulses, his very hopes, are all bad. He has passed beyond the limit of ordinary morality, — even along its lowest level. Crime now is not the exception, but the very law, of his life. Day and night are one prolonged occasion of license. There is no let-up to his wickedness. His indulgence is unlimited and constant. This is no fancy picture :

such men — pardon me, such *creatures* — exist. They are here in your city, and in every city in the world. Your jails are full of them, and your streets are fuller than your jails.

3. The third picture outlined in the parable is of a somewhat different character. The colors have changed slightly. They are still black, but less set. The oil is drying, and the surface becoming less coarse. We now behold a man dissatisfied with his evil courses. He sickens at his own sin. It no longer flowers in beautiful colors. The leaves have fallen, and the thorns pierce him. His hands bleed. The pain of his suffering causes him to reflect. Out of the very ruins of his pleasure springs the germ of a better life. His eyes at last are open. They stand wide apart with horror at himself and his surroundings. He is as one who goes to sleep in a palace, and wakes in a miserable garret. The young spendthrift, by a swift declension, has reached the bottom of the hill. Yesterday he had all he could desire: to-day he stands stripped of every thing, — without a home, without money, without friends, without clothes, without food. He is *starving*. What shall he do?

I never read this parable without pausing at just this point in the story. Here is the climax and the crisis. When a man or woman stands in this position, there are but two possible results, — reformation, or despair. When a person has gone down, and gone down, until he can go no farther unless he goes to total wreck; when by bitter experience he has learned that the fruit of sin is death; when the very violence of his

fall has shocked him into thoughtfulness, and he sees what he has missed, and upon the brink of what a fearful gulf he stands, — then I say he has reached the critical moment of his life. At just such a point in experience this young man in the parable is pictured to us as standing. He was but the wreck of his former self. The beauty and strength of his body were gone. Indulgence had drained the very vigor out of his blood. His property was all squandered: not a dollar was left. His provisions were exhausted; but his wants remained. Even wretchedness must eat, or die. The very menials in his father's establishment were rich in comparison to him. They at least were fed and clothed; while he was at the point of starvation, and destitute of even the necessities of life. Something must be done, and quickly too; but what?

How many men and women in this city are standing to-day in just this position! — although with them it is their souls, and not their bodies, that suffer and are in want. For months and years they have been living a career of sin. Morally they are undone. While they have been wading in the stream, the current has been deepening and gathering strength, until they can with difficulty keep their feet. They feel that they cannot stand much longer. The swell of their last temptation nearly lifted them from the bottom. They must get to the shore, or be swept away.

Friend, if you know or conceive of any one in all the list of your acquaintances in such a position, go to him. Go to him at *once*. Now is your time. Ah, how your presence will help him! How the touch

of your hand will give him new hope! I know a man who came nigh to drowning once. He was boating it, and snapped his paddle in the rapids, and was shot out of his boat like a bolt. He struggled and fought in that hell of water and foam as only a man will who has been trained to danger, and has a wife and five children to make life sweet. But what is man in the grasp of the elements? His arms began to fail him, and his heart to sink. The feeling of hopelessness was entering into him, and he was even saying to himself, "I must die!" when from far up the flight of quivering water, cutting through their roar like a knife, came the voice of a comrade, saying, in half whoop, half cry, "Steady, Dick! hold up a minute more!" and in an instant a canoe, borne like a feather on the gale, swept down, dipped as it passed him, and a paddle, as it dipped, swept him into the boat. He was *saved*!—and the man declares, to this day, that it was nothing under heaven but his comrade's whoop that saved him. And so in the realm of the spirit: it is astonishing how little a thing at times will save a man. A grasp of the hand, a smile, a word even, is often enough in God's hand to change the entire course of life, to save a soul from death. So I say to you, my people, if any of you know of any person who is in danger, who is struggling amid the rapids of temptation, and in peril of being swept down, now is your time to save him. Make an attempt, at least, to rescue him. Tell him not to give up. Tell him to make one more effort. Tell him that there is hope for him yet. Put your arms around

him, and give him the loan of your strength. Never give a man up morally. Why, flowers will grow even in the soil of the grave; and so, out of the very dust and corruption of a man's nature, God can cause the beauty of holiness to appear. I would never give a man up, I say; no, not until his latest breath had come and gone, and his eye become set forever; and, even as he died, I would sink my ear to his stiffening lips to catch some whispered prayer, and search his closing eyes for some gleam that should tell me, that, amid the gathering shadows of death, the light of a great hope had unexpectedly flashed its glory upon him.

But to return. We next see the young man under strong conviction of sin. He sees his faults and his folly. His eyes are, at last, open to the wretchedness of his condition. As he soberly considers his circumstances and his prospects, as the past rises up in review before him, he is pierced to the heart. I say, *soberly* considers them. When a sinner begins to think, he is half saved; for reflection is the mother of conviction, and what Satan most hates. If he can only amuse, only divert, only distract the mind, so that it shall have no season to consider, to analyze, — no opportunity to *think*, — he is content. One of the prime elements of sin is heedlessness, — a rash and reckless inattention to consequences. Take the young men in this city who are rushing to ruin, squandering the forces of body and brain in riotous courses. How thoughtless they are! How they spin around the circle of wild and wicked indulgence of

their passions and their appetites, seeking and finding in moral giddiness temporary escape from the reproaches of conscience, whose voice shall yet be heard in tones of thunder! Here is a man convicted of his need of Christ, and yet unwilling to become a Christian; and so he buries himself in business, and multiplies his engagements, and seeks to relieve himself from the very feelings which God has given him to be a blessing to his soul. How can men play so directly into the hands of the Adversary to both their present and eternal hurt? Speaking against him, speaking in behalf of your highest interests, speaking along the line of experience and knowledge, friends, I say to every one of you who are doing such things, who are transgressing any law, who are living in daily neglect of duty, who are flying from the mercy of God as if it were your foe, Stop and *think*: where will your present course land you? Forecast the future: into what harbor will you come at last, when you have finished your voyage? Why is not this the day for you to break away from evil, or take a new and stronger stand in goodness? Why is not this the very hour for you to say, in the language of the convicted prodigal, "I will arise, and go to my father's house"?

This determination sprang, as you all see, from a supreme dissatisfaction with his condition. He was wretchedly off, and he felt it. Every one of you who are acting against the will of God, if you would only stop and think for a moment, would feel the same way; for God has made you too noble to be base

without a struggle. I take you to witness, judging by your own experience, that Heaven does not surrender you without an effort: your soul does not go to its death willingly, but is dragged, resisting, and crying out against the cruel forces that compel it. Do something wrong, commit some crime, and mark the result. What remorse you have! How the consciousness of your sin gnaws away at your peace! How the fear of exposure torments you! I tell you, "the way of the transgressor is hard." Some people talk as if men and women go devil-ward with easy rapidity. Now and then, one does. Now and then, a man swoops toward destruction, as an eagle, stricken far up in the sky by a flying bullet, swoops with set wings downward until it is dashed upon the resounding earth. But the number of such is small. The majority of those who are wicked have become such by degrees. Their declension was gradual and intermittent. Between their first and second positive acts of transgression there was a pause and a struggle. One must sin a great while before he is insensible to right conduct. The soul is not morally petrified in a day.

No wonder, then, that when the young man "came to himself," when he stopped to think, when he began to reflect on his past and present condition, and the causes that wrought the awful change, his soul was filled with regret. No wonder that a powerful conviction took hold of him; that his eyes were opened, and he saw his folly and his sinfulness. He made a decision. Standing there amid the swine, by

his physical necessities brought almost to a level with them, he formed a resolution. He made up his mind: "I will arise," he said, "and go to my father's house, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

Here was genuine repentance, — a frank and full confession of his sinfulness. Here was a change of mind, radical and emphatic. Here, too, was humility, ready to accept any position, provided only that it was near the father's person, and subject to his care. I wish you all to observe how entire was the surrender of his former opinions, how thorough the retraction, how noble the determination. He was not impelled by the desire to be restored to favor and support. It was not selfishness that prompted the resolution. Above every other desire, apparently, was this, — to get to the presence of his father, and say, "Father, I have *sinned*." It was the heavy burden of his guilt from which he sought release. His confession was not general. It would not satisfy him; it would not ease his conscience to say it to the world at large: he must go to his father, and say to him, "Father, I have *sinned*."

Is there not some one present to-day with some sin on his conscience of which he repents? Is there not some one here who is convinced that his life has not been what it should have been; who is dissatisfied with his present position; whose mind has undergone a great change of late, and, unable to bear the pressure much longer by himself, feels that he must say some-

thing to somebody? For now and then the consciousness of sin so smites against a man, that the pain becomes intolerable; and as a child relieves itself by crying, so he must find relief by giving vent to his feelings. He must unburden himself, or his heart would break. Half of the attractive power of the Roman-Catholic Church is to be found in its confessional. To it the guilty or sorrowing heart goes as to a refuge. Is there in all this audience some soul in such a position as this? — some heart so borne down by the sense of its sin, so pressed upon on all sides by conflicting thoughts, so pierced by some keen shaft of conviction, that he cannot much longer hold his peace, but must cry out, though the shame of all the world comes upon him? If there is, I tell you, friend, go at once to God with your confession. Tell it not to man; tell it to him. Summon no human ear: go at once to the Divine Presence, and say, “Father, I have sinned; make me as one of your hired servants;” and, instead of being made a servant, thou shalt be made a son. Who of you believes this?

The Scripture goes on to say that “he arose, and came to his father.”

Here was repentance followed by action. The act testified to the thought, and proved it genuine. He did not stop to debate: he had no right to do so. No one here, being convinced of his duty, has any right to delay its performance. If your heart, friend, speaking from within you, says that you ought to become a Christian, then become one. If within you

is one desire for a cleanlier life than you have of late been living, for a nearer connection with God, put that desire to-day into your conduct. Stamp the molten metal of your inclination into the form of an act. It is wrong of you to hesitate, to hold back, to halt between two opinions. To whom, I wonder, in this congregation, does this counsel come with the force of a direct application? Is it you on my left? Is it you on my right? Or art thou the man, friend? Who is it in this audience whose heart beats in response to the interrogation? Who has reached that point in his experience at which he is ready to rise, and go to his father's house? If any, I say to them, Arise, arise at once, and start toward home.

We have thus far, my friends, been looking at the human side of the subject; we have been studying and analyzing the man. Let us now look at the divine side; let us, for a moment, study and observe the feeling and action of God.

The most important of all questions that a man can ask himself is, "How does God feel toward me? What is his expectation? and how have I met it?" The most interesting of all interrogations to men at large is this: "What is the predominating sentiment in the bosom of God toward the race? How does he feel toward man as man?" Any thing that throws light upon this point, any thing in nature or revelation which draws aside the veil from the countenance of the Invisible, and enables us to behold the expression of his face, is invaluable.

Now, this parable is the pearl of all the parables in

this respect. Indeed, there is no passage in all the Scriptures which speaks with such minuteness of detail, with such emphasis of illustration, touching the feelings of God toward man, as does this. It removes every possible ground of conjecture. Fog can as well hold its own against a strong current of air as doubt and hesitation bear up against the wind-like movement of this passage. The prodigal had repented of his wickedness and folly. He had decided to return, and cast himself on his father's mercy. How would that father receive him? Would he even grant him an audience? His highest hope, his boldest prayer, was to become a servant where once he had lived as a prince. Would he be granted even that position? What anxiety, what conflicting thoughts, must have agitated his mind as he journeyed homeward! If he could only meet some one of his father's household! only get some hint as to what would be his probable reception! Did they remember him still? Was his name ever mentioned at home? or was there a ban put upon it, and all allusion to it by common consent forbidden? What a journey must this of the prodigal's have been, as in sorrow and remorse, in poverty and rags, all the fair and early prospects of his life blasted, all his hope gone, he begged his way toward the princely home of his youth! At last he draws nigh to the place of his birth, the locality of so many tender and touching memories. The old familiar sights once more, one by one, meet his eyes; and now, while yet at a distance, the never-to-be-forgotten roof

stands in view. You and I, friend, after a briefer absence than had been the prodigal's, with less in memory and circumstance to quicken the heart, have choked as we caught sight of the familiar door, and knew that mother and father were within. "How can I go on?" he must have exclaimed as he stopped and looked at himself. "How can I present myself at the door in such a plight? How can I meet my father's eye, and stand in my father's presence?—that father whose counsel I disregarded; whose love I slighted; whose care I despised; whose princely gifts, even to the half of his estate, I have squandered!" At this moment it was, even as he was standing in fear, hesitation, and doubt, his father saw him. Oh the feeling of that father's heart! You who are parents, assist me to realize it. Tell me what words I can select to fitly express it. Tell us all, that these sinful men may know how God feels towards them, how you would have felt in that father's place. There, before him, stood his long-lost son, his latest born; but, oh, how changed from what he once had been! His clothing was like a sot's or beggar's. Debauch had seamed his once fair countenance. Hunger had written its lines in unmistakable characters across his face. His look was the look of woe; the hollow, craving expression of a man when hope and heart have been beaten out of him. But no outward change of raiment, no haggardness of the flesh, could deceive that father's eye. It was his boy he saw. His heart rose up within him. Oh the rising of a father's heart at

such a time ! What must it be ? He forgot the young man's rebellion ; he forgot his desertion ; he forgot every thing but his love for his boy. He started ; he ran ; he fell on his son's neck ; he kissed him ! Is this, then, God in his feelings toward man ? Blessed forevermore be the lips that spake, and the pen that recorded, this parable for our eyes to see and our ears to hear !

If there are any in the Divine Presence at this moment longing for reconciliation with God ; any who feel dissatisfied with their former life, and would change it ; any desirous of knowing what would be their reception if they should go in penitence to their heavenly Father, — you all must feel at this moment what it would be. Away with definition ! — no one can define God. Away with dogma ! — no one can state his attributes. Away with the controversy of creeds ! — you might as reasonably expect to behold the reflection of all the stars in the heavens in one mirror as to confine the glory of the Divine Nature within the covers of a pamphlet : but here in this parable, spoken by Christ himself, here in this picture of a father with his arms around the neck of his son, kissing him, behold the attitude of God toward you to-day, and learn the love that no language can express and no formula declare.

But the cordial, the compassionate, the tender reception on the part of the father did not lessen the son's sense of guilt. He felt his utter unworthiness all the same, — even more. His conviction had been deep, his repentance sincere. It was not selfish ben-

effit that he came to seek : no mean idea of profit, no mercenary motive, had brought him home. It was forgiveness he wanted. It was reconciliation he craved. It was nearness to his father's person for which he longed. Release from his remorse ; deliverance from the terrible thought of his ingratitude ; his father's love, his father's care, — these were the desires of his heart ; these were the emotions, which his father's kindness had only served to deepen, that broke forth amid his sobs ; and he said, “ My father, my father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ! ”

See the uppermost thought. It was *sin*. It was sin, not against man merely, not against himself even, it was sin against Heaven, which he had committed. It was this that smote him with so deep a sense of his unworthiness. It was this he could not forget. But behold the forgiveness of the father ! It covered, it wiped out, every thing. It did not put him a while upon probation. It did not consign him for a month or six weeks to the servitude of fear. It was prompt ; it was complete ; it was with *joy*. “ But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet ; and bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry : for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found.”

My friends, behold the omnipotence of *forgiveness* ! The mountains are vast, and the sea is without bounds : but neither can symbolize the forgiving love

of God ; for its head is higher than the heavens, and the waves of its influence roll where the surge of the ocean never beats. The poles do not limit it, nor the circumference of the firmament circumscribe. The eagle can soar to an atmosphere too thin to uphold its weight, and man can climb to a height where he cannot breathe ; but no angel can lift himself and no spirit mount beyond the diffused presence of its power. It is the very atmosphere of God ; and, wherever life and being are, there may it be breathed.

Who here is breathing of this atmosphere to-day ? Happy man ! happy woman ! What soul, returning from its wanderings in sin, can feel the arms of divine compassion around its neck, and the greeting of forgiving love upon its face ? What one of you all, who came to this sanctuary to-day, came as a prodigal, and can now hear your Father's voice saying to his angels that minister to the voice of his mercy, " Bring forth the robe of Christ's righteousness, the robe of joy, the robe of restoration, and put it on this soul ; and bring forth the ring, the emblem of rank and dignity ; and the shoes, those sandals that my chosen ones wear, and put them on him ; and make ready a feast of welcome and celebration : for, lo ! this soul that was dead is alive again ; and this spirit, that was lost so long, is at last, to-day, found " ?

My people, I strive in this discourse to give utterance to your past, to embody in speech the primal idea on which this church was based. On the day when this edifice was dedicated (Jan. 10, 1810), standing in this pulpit, Dr. Griffin of sainted memory, from

whose teachings you so largely derived your now historic position, said, —

“The worship of God, as conducted in this house will not, I hope, wear the appearance of controversy, much less of bitterness against others, but of weakness rather, and gentleness, as the spirit of the gospel dictates. This pulpit was not erected to hurl anathemas against men, who to their own master must stand or fall. But here, with an eye uplifted to heaven, and filled with tears, we are to make supplication for ourselves, our families, our brethren, and for a world lying in wickedness. Here, I hope, the truths of the gospel will be preached in all their simplicity, in all their mildness, and in all their force, without uncharitable allusions to any who may defend different views of the Scriptures.”

It was not controversial dogma, it was not the terror of the law, it was not the dry formulas of the contesting schools, that he, who might almost be called the father of this church, said that he desired to have preached here. No: it was the simplicity and mildness of the gospel, the simple story of the cross and its humane applications, that he would forever have this pulpit proclaim; and nowhere beyond what they are in this parable are these characteristics of evangelical doctrines brought out.

And now, friends, if there is a single person in all this audience who came here in doubt as to what are God's feelings toward him; any one half persuaded, and yet not daring to venture upon his mercy; any over against whom such a mountain of sin has

been heaved up by his transgressions, and who is so filled with the sense of his guilt and folly, that he said to himself, "God never will forgive me: others may have hope; but my transgressions have been too many and great," — I trust that he no longer despairs, but has had such a hope come to him as he has listened and thought this morning, that he has already cast himself in glad confidence upon that mercy which is greater than his guilt. I do not say that you shall all repent to-day; I do not say that you shall all become Christians: for these things are beyond my ordering. Such decisions rest entirely with you. But I do say, that, if any of you go out of this room this morning unforgiven and unaccepted of God, it will not be because you are in doubt as to what his feelings are toward you, or as to the reception you would meet with should you arise and go to your Father's house, and say, "Father, I have sinned." Come, then, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden with the burden of your sins; come, all you who broke away in your youth from your Father's house, and tire of your absence; come, all ye who are spiritually poor and weak and cast down, — know that your Father is waiting for you to-day. Before you reach his presence he will see you. While you are a great way off will his eyes behold you. He will see you, I say. He will run towards you. He will take you in his arms. Weak and faint, you shall lie on his bosom. You shall feel his kiss on your face. He will restore you to his favor, and you will live in his house as a son and prince forever.

SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 19, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—CHRISTIAN FAITH: ITS NATURE AND EFFICIENCY.

“IN THE LAST DAY, THE GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HATH SAID, OUT OF HIS HEART SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.” — John vii. 37, 38.

VOLTAIRE said that “man was a religious animal.” The infidel spoke truth for once, at least so far as he affirmed the presence of religious tendencies in man; for it is undeniable that the human mind has its adaptations for spiritual exercise. It has spiritual longings and needs. No immortal being can keep his aspirations within the strict limits of a mortal life. His thoughts and feelings break over, and range widely on all sides. Like another Columbus, he believes in the existence of a world he cannot see. In reason he has demonstrated it. Day and night, his hope stands upon the lookout until that undiscovered country shall heave in sight. Ever and anon, a scented shrub upon the tide, a faint suggestion of fragrance in the air, or the flash of crimson wings through the mist, tells him

that he has almost come to the mysterious continent toward which he has so long sailed. When, therefore, I speak in explanation of the principles of religion, I speak of a subject in which you are all interested. We may not think alike ; but every one must have some faith concerning the future. That person, with fair mental capacity, that is not curious as to it, who does not often assault it with sharp interrogations, is a marvel of intellectual lethargy ; for death must either be the grandest triumph, or the worst catastrophe, of a man's life.

So, as I said, we are all alike interested in this matter. We all have a mutual interest in knowing just where we stand, and what we need. If there is thirst within us, where can it be quenched ? If there is danger ahead, how can it be avoided ?

Now, friends, there is this peculiarity about the religion of Christ as held by the evangelical churches, which must recommend it to every honest and earnest seeker after truth : it is a positive religion, — positive in its principles, definitions, and explanations. If a man comes to me, saying, “ What must I do to be saved ? ” I can tell him. If he inquires, “ Why do I need to be saved ? ” I can tell him that. I do not speculate. I do not theorize. I do not amuse him by telling him what is not true. I tell him simply what is true. This is a great gain to start with. And all those preachers who are striving to build up a church on negation will find their labors vain. The age in which we live admires construction more than demolition. He who builds up, and not he that

pulls down, will invariably win the suffrage of the people. But the Christian religion is not only positive; it not only builds a person up in knowledge and goodness, but it does it by a process and in a way peculiar to itself. The mode of its operation is unlike that of any other force known in the realm of morals.

There has never been a time, perhaps, in which efforts were not made to better men; in which, at least, men did not speculate how to better themselves. The problems in morals have been as numerous and as closely contested as the problems of science. But, while countless methods have been suggested whereby man might be developed and ennobled, no uninspired writer ever hit upon the plan adopted in the Bible. The idea that the forces to purify and elevate man were to be found *in* man; that the beauty of manhood, like that of a flower, should be but the unfolding of a germ divinely planted in the heart; that the richest maxims of morality should be proved sterile beside the germinant and germinating qualities sowed broadcast in the nature by the Spirit, — this, I say, was never dreamed of prior to the coming of Christ. Here we behold the broad line of demarcation which divides all philosophies from the religion of the New Testament; and, that all of you may have it well impressed on your minds, we will pause at this point a moment to examine it.

You have often seen a tree crooked and stubby in its trunk, gnarled and contorted in its branches, and every bough scarred with unsightly warts. It is aston-

ishing how ugly a tree can look, — almost as ugly as some men. Now, you can imagine that some one might undertake to rectify that tree, and go to work with saw and axe and knife to trim it up, and pare it down, and thin it out, and make it symmetrical ; at least, less offensive to the eye : but he finds that he cannot do it. He can never, with any amount of trimming and cutting and paring, lengthen the stubby trunk, nor strengthen the crooked limbs, nor smooth down the warts : even if he might, the excrescences would grow again, and the tree, within a twelvemonth, swell all over with uncomely protuberances, and the attempt be a total failure.

But suppose that He who gave the tree life, and has power over all the forces of Nature that minister to it, should infuse them with purgative and rectifying qualities ; should so change the very sap of the tree with correcting and vitalizing power, that in answer to this energy, this propulsion from within, the trunk should weary of its stubbiness, and be thrilled with a new ambition to grow, and shoot up, and the crooked branches stretch themselves out, finding correction in growth, and all the excrescences be sloughed off and fall away, leaving the bark smooth and green : you can all see at a glance how the tree might be rectified ; how it might become a reformed, a regenerated tree ; and you see how superior this latter method is to the former.

Well, very like to this is it with man and the two methods adopted for his betterment ; the one method inspired by the gospel, the other attempted by the

wisdom of the world. Man is crooked and dwarfed by nature. His faculties are contorted, and doubled in upon themselves; and, spiritually, he is ridged and covered all over with the protuberance of evil habits, and not seldom foul with the excrescence of passion and appetites; and there are only two ways to rectify and reform him. He must be operated upon from within, or from without. External force must be applied, or internal force generated. And so education comes along and lays hold of him, striving to straighten him, but fails; and morality saws away at his rougher vices, and, to its honor be it said, often removes them; and polite culture trims down his coarseness; and the fear of public opinion represses his gnarled devilishness: but in spite of education, which never made a saint yet, and not seldom makes the reverse; and in spite of morality, which is no more to a man's temper than a curb-bit is to a fractious horse, which restrains, but does not remove, his viciousness; and in spite of polite culture, which never did any thing more than to patch over the manifestations of depravity; and regardless of public opinion, which prevents more thieving than jails, — the man remains crooked in his disposition, coarse and unlovely. There is no power under heaven, acting solely from the outside upon human nature, that ever did more than to make men decent; ever did more than protect society from the grosser and more positive exhibitions of appetite and passion. Holiness of nature and of act never flowered out from such a planting.

But observe: let God draw nigh to a man, and

essay his rectification, and where does he begin? With the outside? No: he begins at the man's *heart*. He goes to the very roots of all his growth, and charges the very currents of his innermost life with new functions. He penetrates and infuses the man's spiritual system with healthy and operant elements. He does not attempt to filter the stream: he goes at once to the very fountain-head of all his activities, and says, "Here let me purify this, and the current will clarify itself." That, friends, is the philosophy of regeneration, as it is called, — of the Spirit's work in the heart; and I submit if there ever was a philosophy plainer, simpler, or more readily apprehended. There is no mystery about it. It is only this: sweeten the flower, and the breeze will be scented.

You see at a glance what spiritual economy there is in this arrangement. There is no waste of power, no misapplication of effort. You educate a man, and he will forget the lesson; you moralize, and the impression passes away; you threaten him with penalties, and he takes refuge in his cunning, and defies law: but you correct his disposition, you change his heart, you purify and ennoble his motives, and you have secured all you desired at one stroke. Protect the reservoir, and all the pipes will run clean. Not only this: the man himself is not only pure and just and benevolent, but he communicates these to others. A friend sent a bunch of English violets to my study the other day, and they filled the whole room with their perfume. They did it without any effort; without trying to do it. They seemed to say,

“It is our life to be sweet: when we are not longer sweet, we shall be dead; for while we have any existence, any vitality in us, we must be fragrant.” And so they yielded themselves upon the air, and passed away, and died, — dying as they had lived, imparting sweetness. And for three entire days they made my study like a meadow; and I thought and wrote of God as if I were seated amid the grasses when the moist earth and flowers mingle their breath in the warm sunshine. And so it is with a Christian whose heart has been changed from what it was by nature by the regenerating influence of the Spirit. Such a person cannot prevent his fervor and purity from spreading and communicating themselves. Why, if you are patient and pure-minded and charitable, how can a person come nigh you, and not be impressed by these qualities? Mirth is not one-half as contagious as goodness. It passes from lip to lip, and heart to heart, as birds pass from one tree to another, singing as they go. It is the common property of the world as truly as the fragrance of an orchard in June is the property of all who pass it. The owner cannot fence it in and monopolize it. God has seen to it that the sources of human delight, the creations that minister to human happiness, shall never become the exclusive property of any. He has placed them above the laws of earthly ownership. And so the trees flower, and the winds that know no fences nor bounds waft their sweetness every which way; and the laborer who does not own a rod of ground, and the beggar who does not deserve to own one, —

for he is too lazy to work for it, — and the little child on its way to school, all can breathe the delicious air that the rich man's orchard has sweetened. And so it is with goodness. You cannot keep it to yourself. It is as unselfish as a blossom. Its very life consists in moving and blessing. It is river-like ; and, as you all know, a river not only fills its own banks, but has its great beneficent freshet seasons, when it overflows its ordinary limits, and pours the rich and enriching tide of its fertilization over all the country round about it. And so the human heart, once empty and dry as a river's bed in August, fed and filled from the hidden sources of God's imparted love, swells and rises in all the current and outgoing of its affections, and overflows in blessing on all mankind. It is a very mockery of this beautiful and primal law of God touching the communication and common fellowship of goodness, that men will flock together, and form cliques and circles, shutting themselves up within sectarian and denominational lines, and strive to be dissimilar, when God by the touch of his Spirit has converted them from the antagonisms of nature and unbelief, and made them to be as one in Christ Jesus, with one faith, one Lord, one baptism. It is unwise ; it is wrong. It is elevating human taste and preference and prejudice above the aspiration of Christ and the purest longing of a sanctified heart ; which is, that all the children of God, and all those the world over who would fain be children, being prevented by reason of their ignorance touching the method of adoption, may be one, united each unto all, and all

unto each, even as are the branches of a tree, which improve their fellowship by growth, and get nearer unto each other as they strike their roots the deeper into the centre of a common trunk.

But I must not diverge from the central thought. I am striving to illustrate the difference between the gospel plan of reforming men and those that ignore the work of the Spirit in the heart, and to show you the superiority of the former over the latter. I wish you all to appreciate the vast, world-wide difference between the Christian religion and those religions and philosophies that take no account of the new birth, and leave the atonement of Christ entirely out of the problem. I desire that you who are merely moralists as contrasted with Christians; you who are striving with your own powers of will, unassisted and uncorrected of God, to make yourselves better, — may to-day realize that you are fighting a hopeless fight. You are working only from the outside, in the way of pressure and restriction; whereas, if ever developed at all, you will be developed in holiness in the way of germination and expansion. You are striving to make a crab-tree bear peaches by pruning it. You put your hope in the saw and the knife, and not in the inserted slip; whereas, as you all know, a new and higher order of life must be grafted into it or ever it will bear any thing better or sweeter than the expression of its own original bitterness. I ask you, therefore, to give over your useless attempt. You are proceeding on wrong principles of arboriculture. You are flying in the very face of Nature, which ordains

that like shall produce like. I ask you that your eyes may no longer remain shut, but stand open in recognition of your past folly ; and that you “ receive with meekness the ingrafted word, that is able to save your souls.” That is a criminal folly that refuses assistance in an effort so pregnant with grave consequences to you in your relation to either world as is this in which you are engaged. I know that this applies only to you, in this audience, who are sincerely desirous of living better lives than you have lived, and who have solemnly declared to yourselves that your future shall be of a different complexion from your past. I do not say, friend, that you cannot live a better life than you have lived without becoming a Christian, — without such experience of repentance and faith as the Gospels enjoin upon all to have : for shame will do much, and fear more ; and by mere force of will, by sheer determination, you will be able to keep within the limits of safety as defined by human law. You may be able, from sources of resolution within yourself, to leave off drinking, and break off swearing, and withhold yourself from the grosser pollutions of past indulgence. But this I will say to you, and you must allow it, for it is true, that there is not a thing which you intend to do that you cannot do easier with God’s help than you can without it, and that many things that you should do you never will nor can do unless you are assisted of him. You will never love him unless he shall “ create within you a new heart.” You will never obey him unless love shall prompt you to such obedience. You will never stand

acquitted before the law which for years you have disobeyed, unless, in penitence and contrition, you ask for pardon. Come, then, in faith to Christ; not in a faith that is without works, or that undervalues works, but that quickens you to work, and is manifested by works; a faith which, while it relies on the mercy of God alone for salvation, is as active and diligent and watchful as if it relied entirely on itself. I do not preach a Christ to you that saves his people by working for them alone, but by working *in* them, and thus disposing them to work out their own salvation. He has never saved, he never will save, a single soul, independent of its own activities, — such as love, repentance, obedience, and the constant use of all the helps and agencies of the Gospels; but he has saved, and will save, all who, thus prayerfully and zealously co-operating with him, strive to make their calling and election sure. He mercifully begins that work in your hearts which you and he both, acting in harmonious alliance, your wills being yielded to his guidance, carry forward until you are perfected in holiness.

Do you all catch the idea? Do your minds clearly apprehend the philosophy of the thing? Do you see the beauty, the fitness, the harmony of this plan of salvation, which begins in the soul, and works outward, first purifying its thoughts and motives, and in this way correcting the conduct? What other plan is so feasible, so economic of moral forces, so evidently of God, so honorable to men? Be persuaded, then, all of you to whom my words come, and apply to Heaven for help. Go no more into the battle against Satan

naked and without weapons, when you can, if you choose, be perfectly equipped at all points. Am I to stand by and see you swept down by your afflictions, deceived by errors, misdirected by false prophets, led captive by your sins, dying without hope, and ushered into the presence of God without an advocate to plead for you, when you can have a Teacher and Comforter and Helper and a Saviour for the asking? If I cannot prevail upon you who are rich and educated and physically strong, and to whom death seems as a far-off event, let me address myself to some ignorant person here, some day-laborer, some poverty-stricken one, or some one weakened by disease, unto whose soul death appears as an event soon to be experienced; or some poor woman without a husband or love or home; to some unfortunate person unto whom life is only a multiplication of labors and griefs and disappointments; and to all you who feel your deep unworthiness before God, and are ready to ask, "What must we do to be saved?" — let me turn, my friends, to you, and say, "Call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Let me remind you of your past struggles with the Tempter, in which he has always proved over-strong for you; of the sinful habits against which you have made so many resolutions in vain; of your defeat and failure in every effort to lead a godly life; and, borrowing from the great apostle when he broke out in his letter to the Ephesians, exhort you: —

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteous-

ness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and" — last, but not least — "for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel."

I have now spoken of the nature of that faith which has for its residence the heart of man, and pointed out the mode of its efficiency upon the life. We derive from the text one or two other suggestions, which we will proceed to expand. "He that believeth on me," said Christ, "out of his heart shall flow *rivers of living water*."

The idea in the phrase, "rivers of living water," is one of plenitude. The heart that accepts Christ, that is directed and impelled by the Spirit, shall not be the source of one good influence, but of many good influences. A hundred separate sources of benevolence are opened in it. Along a hundred channels of communication the Christian blesses the world. A man with a converted heart in his bosom is as a tree, when, through a thousand blossoms, it distils its sweetness upon the breeze. The very air disseminates his virtues, and the whole neighborhood in which he lives becomes morally fragrant. You send a dozen

missionaries to a heathen community, and see if this picture is not realized. You might as well light a dozen gas-jets in a room, and expect it to remain dark, as to think that ignorance and superstition could resist the outshining piety of those men and women.

Furthermore, the influence of a converted heart is not only abundant ; it is active. The water to which it is likened is *living* water. A converted man's virtue does not stagnate ; it is not gathered into a reservoir of reserve moral force for the world's great emergencies. The emergencies of the world are every-day emergencies ; and hence the activity of true godliness is an every-day activity.

I know that some think otherwise. There is a virtue that is pyramid-like, — stately, solemn, and oppressive ; good to look at, and, for aught I know, good for nothing else. Superstitious ignorance and stupid piety bow down to the feet of it, and exclaim, "What a spiritually-minded man !" "What a devout and holy woman !" But what does this austere, this eternally self-possessed, this glacier-like piety do ? It wraps itself in the mantle of cold reserve, and looks with its sphinx-like face at the crowd below. My friends, I take no stock in that sort of piety. I like self-possession ; I like reserve ; I love to see in all of you decorum and true dignity : but I dislike to the last limit of expression a saintliness cool and pointed and unsympathetic as an animated icicle. I believe that nine-tenths of that kind of piety is sheer formalism ; a severe, castigated, and un-Christ-like discipline of nerve and voice and eye. Where is the genial

overflow of love, the gush of sympathy, and the warm-handed act of assistance? Where is the soft gentleness that stoops to all, and the tenderness that encourages all, and the frankness that invites all? These qualities are not in them. There is not a poor unfortunate in Boston that would lay her head and sob out her grief on the bosom of such a Christian. There is not an honest and deserving beggar in the city that would go up to a door if he saw such a man's or woman's face looking out of the window. And yet, as you know, such men and women are deemed superlatively good in many of our churches, and held up as examples of high Christian development; and this, too, in spite of the fact that there is nothing animated, nothing genial, nothing attractive, in them. Their piety is not like "*living* water," full of life and action, of ripple and flow, pleasant to hear, and free to the thirsty. No: it is like a river of frozen water, — a beautiful, hard, smooth, icy affair; or if not, if it has any life and motion in it, it is a stately, oppressive movement, which men merely admire and wonder at, and lead in channels so high above their heads, that not one lip in ten thousand can ever touch it. Observe, I do not say that the conscientious of this class are not Christians; are not connected by faith to Christ: I only insist and proclaim that they do not fitly type and symbolize the spirit of the Gospels; they do not give one a true and adequate expression of Christ's doctrine; they are no proper examples for young Christians to copy after. The more true piety a man has, the more simple and

frank and generous he is. "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." A converted person is one the windows of whose nature have been thrown wide open, and the love of God has shined into him, and he giveth light to all that are in the house. His is no longer a gloomy and morose nature : it is a sunny and fragrant nature. Children love him as they did Christ ; and children never love sombre and solemn men. The poor and the weak love him ; and the outcast, despised of others and despised of himself, hearing his tender words of hope and cheer, say, "If God is like him, then there may be hope for me ;" and, like the woman of Canaan, he cries out, "O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me !"

My hearers, remember that there is no other test of piety so good as this. A disciple that so incarnates Christ, so embodies the principles of love and mercy that he embodied, that he quickens all with whom he is brought in contact out of their old dead sinfulness, and fills them with longing and crying after holiness, is a true disciple indeed. I should be more cheered and upheld in my ministry among you to know that one poor, weak, erring, and downcast soul would go away from this house at the close of this service with eyes moistened with unwonted tears, saying, "Oh that I had the living water in my heart ! oh that I might feel that there is a brighter day coming for me !" than to hear all of you who are white and good and strong say, "What an excellent sermon we have had this morning ! how much better I feel for it !"

Some of you, I suppose, have gardens; at least, I hope you have: for it is in a garden that one gets back nearest to the experiences our first parents had before they sinned. And have you not gone out just after a heavy shower had passed, and found all the flowers beaten down from their props, the roses all dishevelled and woe-begone, and the pinks hiding their sweet faces for very shame that you, the mistress, should see them so soiled, and spattered with dirt? And did woman or girl ever find sweeter employment than to go to each disentangled vine, and lift and retwine it in its old place, and retie the split buds, and wash the ugly dirt from the stained and disconsolate faces of the pinks? Ah me, what gardening that is! and how it makes one hate bricks and cities to think of it!

And is there any work so delightful to a Christian as to go to those poor souls, which are but God's flowers, that sorrow and sin have beaten down, and lift them tenderly, and wash them from adhering vices, and twine them around the sure support of some sky-reaching hope? I tell you, that the men and women who do that have the "*living water*" in their hearts, and are the only ones who exemplify Christ and the nature of his religion; and I would that you all might feel this, and not go on taking false models to yourselves, and educating yourselves in word and act and spirit farther and farther away from that state of heart which you must reach before the same mind will be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

But, if a person has a piety of this quality in his heart, he must and will do such deeds, unless he is restrained by wrong education or the opposition of circumstances. "Living water" must run and spread and nourish: did it not, it would not be *living* water, but dead, stagnant water. And Christ teaches in the text, that the heart which has faith in him must be an active, sympathetic heart. By the law of its renewed nature it is thus. You may go to the sun-beam, and try to darken it; but its radiance is omnipotent, and you cannot convert it into blackness. And so it is with the renewed heart: you cannot disintegrate it; you cannot take that which chiefly characterizes it away.

One more suggestion. Christ said, "Out of his heart shall *flow* living water."

That is what we all want, my friends. We want our natures to be in such a state, that all manner of good shall *flow* out of them: that is, come forth naturally and spontaneously. Holiness should come as easily and naturally out of the renewed nature as sin did out of the old unrenewed nature. Some people eject goodness. Their good acts are delivered like the report of a gun; not a minute-gun, either. I have seen men who were six months in loading; and, when they were ready to explode with benevolence, they flashed in the pan! There is a certain concussive abruptness in their efforts to do their duty. After four or five years, during all the weeks of which they haven't even ticked, a revival occurs, and the good brother goes off like an alarm-clock. Now, that is

not the Christian method. I presume that Christ—who is our pattern, remember—never made an isolated, positive resolution to do a good deed in his life. He never worked himself up to a pitch of activity, and said, “Now I am going to work; now I will shake off this apathy, and attend to my Father’s business.” His will never had to assist his disposition. In impulse and desire, he was ever ahead of decision and opportunity. Doing good—he called it doing his Father’s will—was the law, the natural exhibition, of his life. Who ever saw a bobolink shoot up from amid the matted clover-heads, and imagine that it was any task for him to sing; that he had scolded himself into the effort; or that a company of neighboring bobolinks had been compelled to exhort him to rouse himself and make the attempt? Why, his wings ached to fly, and his little throat was full to swelling with the crowding notes; and all he had to do was to open his mouth, and the carol came out. And so it is with a truly converted soul. It nests amid the blossoming mercies of God, and is full of love and sympathy, of charity and tenderness. These are truly the expression of its life. They come forth unforced. They can never be concealed. There is something exceedingly repulsive to me in the thought that the line of duty, of sheer obligation, bounds the fullest expression of my life in Christ; that my sympathies are so sluggish, so low-blooded, as to need the spur of duty to quicken their lagging pace; that there is no sweet sentiment in my heart to come out toward my fellow-men as the waters come out of a

spring, because of the uplifting, irresistible pressure of unseen fulness from within ; that none live on earth, or will come and greet me in heaven, save those of whom my knowledge and memory have cognizance, and whom my will benefited.

Ah, no ! Rather let me have the hope of living so that I shall bless many beyond my knowledge, and be like the rivers of living water, which never know how many roots they moisten, how much growth they cause, or how many flowers found fragrance possible to them because of their gracious tide.

My friends, how many of you are living such a life ? How many of you have attained to this level of ceaseless and natural outgoing of goodness ? How many have this living water in your hearts, and are so full of the qualities of blessing that you can never know how many you bless ? Not all of you, certainly. Let us, then, inquire, Where can one find this living water ? Whence comes to us this power, this grace, to live, that evermore shall flow out from us such influences to man ? It can be found, my hearers, I respond, in Christ ; and in no one else can it be found.

Is there not some one in whose society you are better than when with others ; whose presence is a kind of benediction in its power to calm and better you ; in whose presence all bad thoughts flee away, and all good ones gain ascendancy ? Have we grown so old, so far away from our childhood, that the calm majesty of countenance, the sweet placidness of feature, the sound of an honest or tuneful voice, the light of frank and loving eyes, cannot charm us ? Why, I think

I have seen faces which had so much of strength and patience and heaven in them, so much of that expression that lingers give to the beloved disciple, that nothing mean and low and vile could live in the light of them. And I have often thought how much happier and better some people would have been had their lot and companionship been other than they are. It is hard to live with no inspiration near you; with the heavy drag of the days on your soul, and no strong upsweeping current on which to rise. Well, in Christ every longing and loving heart finds just such a friend, only one more abundantly so. Select the best person you know, — that one who helps you most; who comes nearest to your ideal of goodness and strength; with whom, in your reverential moments, you have often thought, if you could only continually be, you could never sin, — select such a one, I say, deepen his sympathies and multiply his powers a thousand-fold, and think of him as loving you with an infinite love, and you have the Christ that I preach as your Saviour and your Lord. Now, on the supposition that I have not exaggerated his feelings toward you, who of you all are ready to go to him to-day? Who of you, taking all your sins of thought and act, and casting them under your feet as things to be hated, abhorred, and trampled upon, will go to Jesus, and say, “Here I am: oh! let me be numbered among your friends”?

Life has its epochs, its crises, its seasons of reflection and change. Many men, having passed through years of indulgence, have come to a point when and

where God rallied all the forces of his own and of human love in their behalf, lifted them out of the mire of their past life, and put a new heart and a new purpose in them ; and from that day, ever after, they lived a happy and upright life. This is proven by the experience of many of you. Now, perhaps, here and there in this audience is a man or woman who reaches just such a point as this to-day. For several weeks you have been reflecting upon your spiritual condition. The more you have looked at your life as gauged by the word of God, the more have you seen your wickedness. You realize at last — what a mercy that it isn't too late ! — the set of the current. You feel, that, during all the years back of you, you have been gliding downward. You had no idea that you had drifted so far from the innocence of your youth. My friend, I am saying this personally to you ; and I say that now is your time, now is the very hour, for you to turn about. If you regret your past ; if you dread to repeat its sins of thought and act ; if you long for a nobler and purer experience ; if you would fain be at peace with God, and have the burden of guilt rolled from off your conscience, where it now torments you, — then is your duty plain, — as plain as the doors of your dwellings at noonday. To you is the invitation of the text ; and the majestic overture of Christ swells out for your ear to hear, for your heart to receive, saying, “ If any man thirst, let him come to *me*.”

It is not a matter of creeds ; it is not a matter of disputed doctrines ; it is a matter of personal appli-

cation to the Saviour. The returned and repentant prodigal did not need to read a treatise on family government when his arms were around his father's neck, and his tear-filled eyes were buried in the folds of his father's robe. What he wanted then—and he had it—was a sense of his father's presence; a sense of his undiminished love; a heartfelt feeling that he was forgiven. So it is with you. I desire, not that you should think of the divine government as I do: I desire that you should feel, touching God, as the prodigal felt touching his father,—that the Deity is near you; that his love, long slighted, long forgotten, is clasping you in its arms, and his face, flushed with a great joy, is over you, even as the heavens with all their glory are over the earth at night.

“If any man thirst.” Is there one here who does not thirst? Have the wells of the earth met your wants? Have the fountains of the world fully satisfied the longing of your souls? Oh! life is gay, and we make it merry with our feigned or sinful mirth. Each has a favorite phantom, and he chases it; each heart its concealed idol, and the temple of our selfish loves are filled with the incense that forever burns upon their unblessed altars. We find our joys in delirium, and our activity in fever. And yet I know, I feel, that man is too vast in his capacity, too mighty in his strength, to be satisfied with these. If the fastening of the mask should part, we should stand amazed at the pallor and wretchedness of the face behind it. And none save God, who made us great enough to suffer greatly, knows what we endure even

in the days that men count our triumphs. No, no! not here do we find peace. Even as the heavens alone are wide enough to hold all the stars, so in Christ alone does man find all he needs. In him the intellect and heart behold a shoreless sea,—a sea whose farther beach, if beach there be, no voyaging of thought, no flight of winged fancy, shall ever touch. Launch then, ye voyagers toward eternity, upon this sea to-day. Cast yourselves on Christ, and feel beneath you the uplifting motion of his life, as ships the heaving of the flooding tide. Let not your past detain you; let not your fears intimidate. I have sailed this sea myself long enough to know that peace broods on its waters; and thousands who once worshipped here, in the very seats in which you sit, sailed it for years with growing joy, and passed from mortal view at last, as vessels, when sailing westward of a summer day, their sails and yards all crimsoned, melt gradually from sight amid the radiance of the broad-faced and luminous sun. So may it be with you, I pray, when you have sunk the orb of this mortal life behind you, and have passed, changing from glory unto glory as you go, until at last your lives shall be hidden with Christ in God.

“And on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.”

SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 26, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—HOUSEHOLD RELIGION; OR, THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

“PEACE BE TO THIS HOUSE.” — Luke x. 5.

I WISH to speak to you this morning upon the subject of household religion, especially that branch of it which relates to the religious education of children,—a subject at all times of the deepest interest, but especially so in seasons of revival. Many of you in this congregation are parents. You represent many households. Your obligations are peculiar. You feel this yourselves. You are guardians over many; and the prayerful search of your hearts is, how you can properly discharge your duties as parents before God. It is in reference to this that I am to speak by way of suggestion. I submit, therefore, to your judgments, the following considerations:—

The first thing you need to remember, as parents, is, that you have no *ownership* in your children. Before you will ever feel and act toward them as you should, you must have a heartfelt conviction that they are

God's children rather than your own. You are not to dispose of them as you wish, but as he wishes. His desires, not yours, are to be consulted in their education. You are to train them to be, not what you would have them to be, but what he would have them to be. He has committed them to your care for a time, to train, discipline, and instruct, and to fit them for such services, and mode of life, as he shall ordain. This is a vital point, — the key to the entire problem. No matter how zealous you are; no matter how earnest and loving and conscientious you are: you will never educate children for God unless you feel that they are his, not yours. If you feel that they are yours, that you own them, you will be likely to educate them for yourselves, and not for him; you will strive to make them excel in things that are agreeable to you, and not agreeable to him: and the result will be, that without realizing it, without wishing it, you will rob God, by the substitution of your own wishes in their education and development in the place of his. He will be divorced from his own, and his own will not know him. They will grow up unfitted for his service, and unconscious of his fatherhood over them. They will never know that to be true which the Scripture teaches, — that God is the former of their bodies, the father of their spirits, whose name they should honor, and in whose service they should find their chief delight.

Secondly, such a mistaken conception of your relation to your children will lead you into another and greater error, — non-submission to God in his providential dealings with them.

When death comes, the mother feels that it is *her* child that has been taken. She has not loved it as God's child, but as her own. She has even made a virtue of appropriating it entirely to herself. She has never admitted to her own heart, she has perhaps never dreamed, that any one save herself and its earthly father had any claim to it, any right touching its disposal. She has never looked upon it as in any sense belonging to Heaven, save in the indirect way of grace and destiny; and either resents what appears to her affection a cruel interference, or, if she submits, does it falteringly, and as one yields to a mysterious and unaccountable mandate coming forth from an authority she can neither resist nor understand. The result is rebellion, or a submission born of a cruel necessity, and accompanied by a grief uncontrolled by an intelligence touching the true relation which, from its very birth after the flesh, it sustained to God. I fear that these remarks will come with abruptness and harshly to you who are parents, and whose habits of thought have been formed on the basis of natural affection, and not of Scripture, which plainly and expressly teaches that God is the maker of our bodies and the father of our souls; that parents and children alike are all his offspring, and, as such, absolutely and without limitation his, to do with us and ours even as appears good in his sight and for his glory. But it is not given unto me to preach a gospel of my own, or in accordance with my own or your past habits of thought. I must proclaim what is contained in the Scriptures, without striving to accommo-

date it to your feelings, the more especially if your opinions are derived from other sources than His revelation of Himself, and of our duties toward Him.

Allow me, then, to exhort you who are parents to no longer deceive yourselves touching this matter. The continuance of this error in your minds will only work mischief to yourselves and your children. Let the head of every household in this congregation remember from this day onward that the members of that household are not his, but God's. That son, in whom you take such pride, whom you have educated and are educating, your prop, your stay, — father, that boy is not yours. There is a higher claim than yours resting upon him : it is the claim of his Maker and his God. His body, his brain, his soul, do not, never did, and never can, belong to you. He has been intrusted to your care : you were elected, by your connection with his birth, to be his guardian, his teacher, his guide, until such time when he shall be able to walk alone ; but the ultimate authority over him, the right to say how long you shall continue to hold this relation to him, or when it shall cease, — this never belonged to you. It is not, therefore, for you to dispose of his life, or say where the locality of it shall be. When his real Father desires his presence, he will call. When he calls, do thou surrender him, and bid him go as one who does not belong to you. He leaves your house to return to his Father's. He dwelt with you ; but his home was never with you, but with God.

The dedication of children to God in baptism is but

the acknowledgment of this truth. In this act of dedication, of surrender, we publicly affirm our belief in God's ownership in our children. Feeling this to be the case, we publicly acknowledge it. We take the church and world to witness that we consider these little ones as God's; and we, as is our bounden duty, give them up to him gladly, lovingly. This is the real significance of baptismal dedication. The same is true touching the baptism of adults. In the act, the man gives himself to God. He publicly acknowledges that he owns not himself, neither by nature nor grace. By nature he belongs evidently to his Maker, by reason of the fact that the thing made cannot own itself; while by grace he has been "bought with a price," and belongs to God by the right of purchase.

I have now announced what I believe to be the true and scriptural principle which underlies the parental relation. Standing upon this elevated conception of it, and making it as our lookout, the whole field of duty lies stretching wide and plain before us. I will now remark, by way of application, —

In the first place, then, this view of the parental relation will supply you, in the training of your children, with the only motive which is in harmony with the scriptural injunction, — the glory of God. If you look upon your children as your own, you will educate them for yourselves; your motive will be your own glory, happiness, and peace: or you will educate them for themselves, that they may be honored, prosperous, and happy. To assist you, or serve themselves; to prepare them for that which, by the

standard of the world, is called usefulness; to fit them to fill earthly positions of trust,—this will be your main motive. For this you will send them to college, or train them in your stores; while in all your cares and plans for them, in all your hopes and dreams, a regard for the divine glory will never enter. I know not how many of you have been doing this; but I warn such of you as have to correct your motives at once. If you have usurped God's place toward your children, God may leave you to fill it. He may say, "You have educated your boy for yourself: now protect him." But what father can protect his son as God can? If your toil and anxieties for your children are prompted only by parental affection, then are you impelled by no nobler or holier motive than are the animals; for verily they will toil and suffer, yea, and die, for their offspring. Never until parental affections are sanctified, never until all your labors, cares, and plans shall be hallowed by a fervent desire to train them so that they may glorify their heavenly Father, will you lift yourselves to the level of a rational and Christian motive.

I ask you, furthermore, to bear in mind that your children are immortal. Their wants are not earthly wants. Their deepest needs are not of this life. This they will not at first realize. This you must teach them. Tell them, then, of heaven. Tell them of the life to come. Tell them of eternity. Be sure, father, to tell your son of these things. Let him early understand the mighty truth of his immortality. Let him not set his affections on things of this world

because he knows not of the things above this world. What! shall you, a teacher appointed of God to teach these things, say nothing whatever concerning them? How will you be able to excuse yourself if you shall remain dumb? If your boy shall be lost, at whose door will God lay the responsibility, — at yours, or his? or will you both be alike condemned? I say not this by way of upbraiding; I say it not in arrogance, or in assumption of authority over you: I say it in the way of suggestion, of exhortation, as your pastor, your spiritual teacher, and your friend. I speak to stir up your minds by remembrance; to put you face to face with the gravest responsibility your lives will ever know. I set my interrogation as a spur to the sides of your affection, that it may not lag, but hurry on toward the goal of its noblest hope; and I say, Remember the immortality of your children, if you hope to stand acquitted of all charge before God at the last day.

The great danger of our country and age is that children are being educated selfishly, and into selfish principles. Ours is a materialistic age and land. Even duty inclines us toward earthiness. In a new, undeveloped country, this is necessarily so. The forests must be levelled, railroads built, canals digged, commerce developed, before art and science and ethical culture can thrive. The progress that this country has made in the last thirty years in material development is beyond all precedent. You may search all history in vain for a parallel case. Never from the beginning of the world was there any thing

like it. Our growth has been like that of the tropics, — rank and exuberant. Ere the seed is decayed, the tree is matured. The very air is moist and heavy with the odors yielded upon it by the upspringing growth around us. Life in America is, to a large extent, a mad chase after material wealth. Our children are fevered at birth. The ambition of the father to amass and hoard finds a new lease of life in the son. As a generation, we are “of the earth, earthy.” Mark you, I do not upbraid you for this. Every force and passion has its place in the plan of God. He utilizes even our excesses, as physicians do poisons. Across the mirk of our sordidness he stretches the arch of his glory. The heavens weep; but he flashes the brightness of his presence through their falling tears. But, friends, you know as well as I, many of you better, — for you read the warning with the eyes of a deeper knowledge and a longer experience, — you know, I say, that such a career has its dangers. Excessive wealth rapidly gained is fearfully attractive. The children worship the gods that the fathers builded; and what to the parents was only the means to an end, becomes to their descendants the object of their existence. The worst possible fortune that can happen to a generation is to live the first twenty years of its life with a false standard before its eyes. That young man who is educated by the example of his father, and the customs of the community in which he lives, to believe that earthly prosperity is the best reward that life can give and effort yield, is mortgaged in all his higher faculties to fail-

ure, to start with; and especially is this true when earthly prosperity comes to him in its lowest and basest form, — the accumulation of money. O father! if you can teach your boy nothing nobler than this, if you can lift his feet to no higher level, if you can crimson his future with no purer hope, then let him die at once. If this is to be the end of your guardianship over him; if, as teacher and guide, you can serve him no better than this, — then yield him back to God. Let him return unto heaven at least with his mind unperverted, and his soul unstained. There, as the ages pass, he shall learn a higher wisdom. There, in the light of the glory of the Lord, he shall live a life worthy of his opportunities, and commensurate with his powers. For what is existence, what the multiplication of days, what the swift passing of years replete with experience of events, — what are these but a curse and a calamity, if they serve but to divorce the young from the Author of their being, and reduce their eternal condition to the status of a Dives?

Listen to me, now, and accept what I say; for it comes in truth out of heaven to you as a star out of the sky. Receive it as it falls into your hearts, lest the heavens withhold their favors, and send no more their messages of brightness to your souls.

Teach your boy otherwise. Say to him, “My son, I am not educating you for this earth: I am educating you for heaven. I am not showing you how to serve yourself: I am showing you how to serve God. It will not delight me one hundredth part so much to

know that you are fitted for business as to feel that you are fitted in character and taste for heaven." Say to him, "My boy, I am not able to keep you: God alone is able to keep you. He alone gives the breath to your nostrils; he alone upholds you: but for him, you would, even while I am talking with you, drop dead. Remember that you are not mine; you are not your mother's: you are God's. He gave you life. He upholds you day by day: without him you could do nothing. By and by, your stay here will end. He will send forth his messenger to bring you home, and you must go. Ah! see to it that you are prepared to meet him in that hour." Say this to your son, father; say it in so many words. Some things must be spoken to be fully understood. The voice adds force to the truth, and deepens its impression. Bear testimony, then, for God, and your children will remember it while you live; and when you have gone from sight, being gathered to your reward, they will say, "Our father failed not in his duty toward us, but taught us all he knew of wisdom;" and they will rise up and call you blessed.

And who are blessed if it be not the parents of pious children? Who are miserable if it be not the parents of the ungodly? Who is so fortunate as they who are represented by intelligence and virtue after they are gone?—who so unhappy as they whose names are linked with ignorance and vice, and perpetuated only in connection with crime?

My friend, is your boy a Christian? If not, does the fact bring an impeachment against you? Have

you used aright the office and prerogatives of parentage? Is he living for eternity? If not, is it through lack of instruction on your part? Is he of the number of those who find their delight in serving the Lord? If not, is it because your example has been to him as a stumbling-block? Would it give you joy to see him take publicly the vows of God upon him? If so, have you, by example, supplication, and prayer, brought the needed conviction upon his mind? Has religion been made to seem an unreal and empty affair to him by your way of practising it? Has your insincerity made him a sceptic? Are you a professor? If not, how can you expect your child to be? Ah me! how inexorably effects are linked to causes! How in the last day shall it be seen that one man fell because another faltered; the wife was lost because the husband hesitated; the children perished through the backsliding of the parents; the son died as a fool dieth, because the father, in all the practices of his life, said, "There is no God"!

Blessed are the childless, if they live not up to the level of Heaven's requirement; blessed the man who can say, "My sins will be buried with me; my faults and follies will reach their limit in my grave; they shall lie down with me in death; they shall die when I die; they shall disappear from the earth when I go hence; they shall be no more forever," — blessed, I say, is such a one beside him who has failed to fulfil the duties, and improve the opportunities, of parentage; for barrenness is better than imbittered and perverted fruitfulness.

The children of the future are to be children of temptation. They will breathe an atmosphere morally miasmatic. Their fathers took the vital elements out of it, and left it tainted. The sources whence you derived your virtue when boys are closed to-day. The old home-life, with its crisp atmosphere of puritan government, its habits of honest and honorable industry, its conservative customs, and its simple, reverent faith in God, all centred around one spot, all hallowing one locality, — these are passed away. Never again will New England know them. Never again will harvests ripen in that upland soil. Our children are nursed on the level of swamps; and the whirl of factory-wheels, and the roar of car and cart, drown the mother's hymn. The oaken cradles that rocked you into vigor are too rough for the effeminacy of this age; and the old songs, on the soft, moving melody of which our infant minds floated into a world as pure as the strain that wafted us, live only in tradition. A boyhood passed in a city is a far different thing than one passed in a country. Its sights and sounds and dirt bring forward what should be repressed. It forces nature, and at a time, too, when the physical and the sensuous preponderate in the nature. It begets a license of thought and conduct before the judgment is sufficiently matured to check it. It kindles the imagination when it should be quiescent, or active only within certain limits and in pure directions. It educates one into necessities faster than individual effort can earn the means of supplying them; and fosters that worst of all habits to a

young man, — eating and wearing and spending what he has not earned. And, lastly, it holds up a wrong standard of success before his eyes, and makes ambition, which God intended as a blessing, a curse, in that it perverts and misdirects the going-forth of its activities. I do not say, parents, that these evil tendencies cannot be lessened or wholly counterbalanced; but I do say that they call for the utmost effort on your part, and make anxiety to be reasonable. A little carelessness, a few years of indifference, a letting-down of watchfulness, and evil examples and surroundings will have done their work, and the characters of your children will be irretrievably weakened or ruined. I do not say that they will not achieve what the world calls success; although even this will be hazarded: but I do say that they will never lead that life of faith and holiness which springeth therefrom, that can alone commend them in their character and conduct to the favor of Almighty God. They will live and labor as those whose lives end at the grave; their treasures will be of this earth; they will labor only for the meat that perisheth; the line of pure selfishness will circumscribe their lives; and the shame and confusion of the fool, and the guilt of the unfaithful, will cover them when they appear before God.

I believe, that to every thoughtful, every sensitive mind, the greatest mystery and the most solemn event of life is the act of birth. The loveliest relationship known to mortals, spanning the darkest life like an arch of light, which rests its either base on blocks of

jasper, is the relationship between parent and child. The bond that is born of begetting and being begotten is the holiest known to men, and the birth of a child the sweetest and most solemn event that can possibly transpire. The body that is not sanctified by the transmission of such a divine communication is indeed dead to all holy impulse. To be permitted by the Divine Power to call a soul from nothingness; to make inanity intelligent; to send out into the universe from the dumb lips of silence, yea, from that which never spoke, and knows no speech, a living note; a note that cannot die; which will move on, unchecked by counter-waves of sound, ever keeping, whether amid the torrent and tempests of discord or the mingling of all melodies, the clear-cut outline of its own individuality; a note that will never reach its fullest expression, never touch a limit and recoil upon itself; that will move on and on, filling one space only to enter another and a larger, — this is wonderful! Before this thought I veil my face as in the presence of too great a light. But what should be our feelings when we reflect that God grants us not only to send forth such a note, but to decide what the character of it shall be? You, parents, are permitted to say whether the lives of your children shall be the prolongation of discord, or the going-forth of a sweet and perpetual hymn; a distinct addition to that good which now is, and is forever, pleasing before God. I fear, friends, that you have all been too little sanctified in your loves, too earthy in your act of parentage, too selfish in your appropriation of

God's own, to have added as you might to the universal harmony.

And now I say to all of you who are under my pastoral charge, and to you also who are with us to-day, as brought together to this assembly by a directing Providence, — and I say it not as declaring an unknown truth, but as re-affirming one already known to you, — The best, the only adequate protection for your children against the manifold temptations to which they are and will be exposed is to be found in personal religion. In bringing them to God in conversion lies your only hope. If hitherto you have neglected this first and greatest duty of parentage, start out to-day upon its perfect performance. I appeal to you as their natural guardians and divinely-appointed guides. I appeal to you as especially favored in circumstance and position. The power of a father's counsel, — who shall estimate it? The tender, lasting, sin-conquering influence of a mother's prayer, — who can describe it? Your children themselves look to you for advice and instruction touching the way they should live. Do you say they have never asked for it? Do you expect, I respond, that they will take the initiative? Is duty to remain undone, until, by forwardness, they reverse the order of nature? Is the boy to teach the sire the fulfilment of obligation? Is the daughter to interpret the providences of God to the mother? Is ignorance to enlighten knowledge? Must weakness brace the loins of strength with a girdle? Must the unrenewed heart show a regenerated nature how to be faithful? What a con-

dition of things is this in a Christian family, when the order of nature and grace both is reversed, and that which should be first is last, and the last first!

Oh that my voice might penetrate to every family in this city, and give expression to the needed rebuke, the needed encouragement, and the needed warning! Oh that this interrogation, as with a force given it from the lips of God, might cleave the intervening distance, and stir the air of every chamber where parents will sleep to-night, and they might hear a voice amid the darkness, saying to their startled and awe-struck souls, "Are you doing your duty to your children?" O parents! you who sleep so soundly at night, while Death, like a burglar, stalks around your dwelling, you who deem your duty done in the daily utterance of a formal prayer at the family-altar, what will become of your children when they die? Will your love save them? Will your pride at their accomplishments avail? Will the sharp regret, the agony of remorse, at your unfaithfulness, call back the departed life when the body of your child lies in its coffin? I marvel that a Christian home can be happy while there is an impenitent child in it.

Bear with me if I press you. If your child is not converted in your household, in what other household may he ever be converted? If he grows hard under your care, at whose touch shall he soften? If you, O mother!—that dearest word this side of heaven, and whether heaven shall reveal a dearer I know not,—if you cannot win him to reason and holiness, who can?

After such a failure, who may ever have the courage to renew the attempt?

Alas ! my friends, I fear that some of you who are parents are not Christians yourselves. Your children are impenitent ; and therein do they follow your example. Their lives are no more faulty than the standard that you put before them. Their very love for you, their very confidence in you, heave up obstacles in the path of their conversion. You stand between them and their God. Their unbelief is rooted in your example. Do you remember the words of Scripture ? “ For it must needs be that offences come ; but woe unto him by whom the offence cometh ! ” I call upon you, — and I speak as one appointed of God to say it to you, — I call upon you, as you love your child, as you would have it live in virtue and die in peace, as you would not neutralize the means of grace mercifully provided for its salvation, to no longer stand in the way of its conversion. Repent and believe yourself, to the end, if for no higher reason, that your child may repent and believe also. Is this not motive enough ? What other appeal might come with such force to a father’s heart ? I make no other. My plea shall rest here. I lay it on your conscience. I bolt it within the chamber of your memory. May it lie forever at the door of the one ! may it never depart from the presence of the other ! I express it in words that the sound of it may haunt you as love haunts the steps of the insane, as fear the presence of the unjust, “ Repent and believe yourself, *that your child may repent and believe.* ”

Must my words be in vain? Shall the days pass, the sun rise and set, the clouds yield their moisture, the laborer fail not, and yet no harvest appear? Is any one quickened? is any one convicted of duty? Have I builded a family-altar to-day? Have I rekindled the flame on one whose fires had gone out? Have I suggested a higher type of love than the earthly? Will your treatment of your children be more tender, more loving, more reverent, now that you have been reminded whose they are? If so, then rejoice with me, friends, as if I had been made rich; for my hope is met, and my prayer answered.

“But shall I love my child less?” I hear some one inquire. Less? No: more, — a thousand-fold more. Heretofore you have loved it for its own sake: henceforth love it for the Father’s sake; for the sake of God; for the sake of “Him whom your soul loveth.” Up to this you have loved it as a mother loves: love it now as Christ loves. Until to-day, you loved it for time: love it now for eternity. Can you lift yourself to this level? Can you make the mortal seem immortal? Will the face of your child appear to you, as you go to your homes this noon, like the face of an angel? If so, pray for no greater blessing than shall come to you: for at your door shall stand the form of a man, yet it will not be man’s; and it shall knock, and you shall open to it; and, when your door is open in welcome, it shall speak, and say, “Peace be to this house;” and the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall abide on you and yours forever.

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 2, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—POSITIVENESS OF BELIEF: ITS NEED AND EFFICIENCY.

“THAT WE BE NO MORE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO, AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE SLEIGHT OF MEN, AND CUNNING CRAFTINESS, WHEREBY THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE.”—Ephes. iv. 14.

MANY inquiries have been addressed to me lately, especially from those in and beyond my own congregation who have recently been converted, and who from this fact are now called upon to consider many matters of duty upon which they have never reflected, concerning the necessity of a fixed and definite belief. Some are troubled in their minds touching the matter of creeds and verbally-expressed formulas of faith; and the passage that I recited as my text has been suggested as one upon which they desire me to base a discourse. The request being reasonable, and one perfectly natural for people in their position to make, I comply.

I do this the more readily, friends, because you who are acquainted with me know that I do not worship formulas nor bow down to creeds. I am not

conscious that I was ever impelled by the love of antiquity. Mildew and mould are not to me objects of reverence. I care no more for a piece of parchment inscribed in the third century than for a pamphlet bearing the impress of the Riverside press. "The Mayflower," in itself considered, is no more to me than any respectable-looking craft in your harbor to-day. Is it needed? Does it bring men nearer to God? Does it enlarge the mind? Does it stir the best sympathies of the heart? These are the questions I put to my judgment concerning any matter brought for me to consider. These compose the real touchstone of value. Every generation has to sit in judgment on its own needs. A change in condition and circumstance often, as you know, begets a change in duty; and what was wise in the father becomes folly in the conduct of the son. Every age has to debate and decide what is right and expedient for itself.

I have often said to you, that I do not care a rush for a belief or a doctrine that does not better a man, and quicken him to Christ-like labor; and I repeat it, hoping by the repetition to make it more emphatic, and embed it more deeply in your memories. And yet I believe in beliefs, and I believe in creeds, — written formulas, express statements of faith. They are, in my opinion, needed and helpful. They strengthen and steady the churches. They strengthen the individual disciple. They hold an important position among the forces that are evangelizing the world. And I wish this morning to suggest to you certain considerations that may cause this to appear manifest to you.

One reason, then, why a positive expression of faith is valuable to a man, is because it compels him to take a position. It centralizes his powers, and brings his energies to a focus. It quickens thought, because it opens him up to attack. It is only when a man's feet touch the bottom that he begins to feel the pressure of the current, and braces himself to resist it. In morals, no believer should drift. Religion, in its doctrinal teachings, is too grave a matter for one to have no conviction upon. It is only when you have clearly decided in your own mind what to think of Christ, where to locate him in the grades of essence and being, reached a positive and heartfelt conviction touching his nature and attributes, that you begin to know what and how much he is to your soul, or where you stand in your relations to him.

Pass, now, from yourself to others, and you find that the birth of positive conceptions in your own mind dates the birth of your influence for good over others. You must get a foothold somewhere before you can ever lift men. Before you can teach the ignorant, you must have instructed your own mind. The very first thing that a seeker after truth desires to know is, what you have discovered to be true. The foundations of his faith are to be hewn from the same quarry from which you blasted yours. It is the positive element in your convictions of duty which charms and impresses him.

The positiveness of conviction also gauges the influence of an organization. No church can live on negation. A think-as-you-please church is not a tem-

ple: it is a heap, an accumulation of individual atoms, which the veriest accident will send flying in all directions. There is no adhesive power in such an organization. It lives as long as one man lives; it lives as long as a circle or caste lives; then dies. That community of conviction and feeling which might have magnetized it, and caused every part to adhere to its neighbor, is wanting; and no solid, permanent structure is possible. You must have a central rallying point and cry, a certain number of principles held in common and loved in common, or ever an organization can perpetuate itself. A belief is, therefore, essential to the very existence and perpetuity of the Church. A declaration of principles which outlives the teachers, which outlives the taught, gathering sanctity as its truth is the more fully perceived, becomes so dear, that men are willing, at last, to die for it.

If you look carefully into this matter, you will find that positiveness of belief is not something foisted on to, but a natural outgrowth of, the human mind. With here and there an exception, man is eminently a creature of belief. He conceives of things sharply, and holds on to them tenaciously. He is not content with vagueness: uncertainty is torment; mystery piques him. He craves knowledge, data sure and satisfactory. You see this characteristic cropping out everywhere in history. Martyrs are not an abnormal outgrowth. It is not singular that man, made as he is, should die for his faith: it would be singular if he did not. Man instinctively honors his own intel-

lect; trusts in its conclusions; yea, trusts in them so entirely, that he is willing to die for them. There is not a drop in all that red sea which the blood of those who died for liberty and God filled, but that gives the lie to those who scout at creeds and laugh at those who give adherence to formulas of faith. The fact is, no man has used his intellect rightly unless he has reached certain conclusions which he is willing to die for. A man who is tossed about by every wind of doctrine; who is this to-day, and that to-morrow, and nothing next day; who is unsettled on every vital point of religion; who looks with equal favor on opposite theories of life; who, out of the vast bulk of material which God has provided him in nature and revelation, can construct no positive system of belief,—is an unnatural production himself. Such a person is either an intentional sceptic, or the resultant of peculiar and exceptional combinations in temperament and circumstances. Every transition period is filled with such men. They are the product and representatives of mental confusion, and not of knowledge. This city is full of such people. They are the bubbles that the agitation of the waters here fifty years ago occasioned. They do not represent the natural and normal posture of the human mind toward God. They represent a revolution, and a revolution not altogether honorable. They represent a philosophy, which, like a bird with one wing, is unable to mount to an altitude whence a correct view can be had of what it seeks to know. They represent theological nightmare and fever.

I need not analyze the past history of the Common wealth, theologically considered. Some of you know it from observation and personal participation, all of you from tradition. You know the position that Boston took when it seceded from the ancestral faith. It virtually said, "We are tired of carrying anchors on our ships: ships were made to sail, not to rest forever, lashed to the same old pier. Come, let us throw the cumbrous things overboard." I will not say but that the fathers did carry a little too much old iron on their decks; that they did not ballast a little too deeply for swift sailing; that lighter ships than they builded out of the live-oak of their times were not at last needed for the rapid commerce of ideas among men, and the promulgation of the humanities. I would not fight with any over this, but grant it. But these would-be reformers not only threw the anchors overboard, but they went to work and tore out many of the heaviest timbers, and started many of the bolts that the fathers used so plentifully in the frame; and the work of disintegration — some call it progress — has gone on, until some of their churches can scarcely be held together. They lack the cohesion which is found alone in a positive belief. Where there is nothing to believe, there is nothing into which to educate a congregation. Similarity of views, and the quick sympathy that springs therefrom, are impossible. There is no evangelizing power in such a church. A gospel of negation, of doubt, of denial, has not in it a single element wherewith to win converts, save the love of destructiveness; and this sentiment is not

at home in this age. The age is a positive one. It is a radical, outspoken age. It is not startled at downright assertion. It is a constructive age, and clamors for granite, — something to perforate and chisel and put together. You might as reasonably expect a political party in this country to live and thrive without a platform, as a church without a creed. A church, like a government, must have a declaration of principles. A statement of its convictions, its object, its articles of faith, is demanded by the public at large. Thoughtful minds desire something to study, to investigate, to accept or reject: they demand it as a right, and will have it.

This is especially true, I maintain, in the matter of religion. Religion deals with the gravest problems of human existence and human destiny. It is based upon a positive revelation of God's will to men. It attempts to answer the gravest questions man ever put to his own soul. The Bible, of all books, is the most positive. Heaven and hell are positive conceptions. Joy and sorrow are positive ideas. Christ dealt largely, throughout all his teaching, in positive assertions: "He who believeth on me shall be saved; he who believeth not shall be damned." Any Bible church must be a church of a bold and unmistakable declaration of its views; any gospel preacher, a man of pronounced opinions, not in respect to human duties alone, but also in respect to divine government. He must deliver a message which has been given him to deliver, whether men will hear or forbear. He has no option in the matter. How to say

it is for him to decide; but what to say is not left to his knowledge or his taste. The strength of his position consists in the fact that he preaches a mystery,—the mystery of God and of godliness; a mystery beyond man's conception; of guilt visited upon the guiltless; a mystery which angels desire to look into, and cannot. Consider it from any point of view, and the same conclusion is reached. His duty is to persuade; but there can be no persuasion unless it be from something positive to something equally positive. His office is to convict: but conviction does not wait on speculation; it is not born of doubt, of denial, of a mere negative philosophy. To persuade a man from crossing the rapids, you must picture the horror of the cataract. A Niagara must exist as the basis of your anxiety and his peril. The possibility of death must be there, or your arguments are powerless, and your fear puerile.

It is a matter of astonishment to me that men can think that a Bible church can exist without a creed, a fixed system of belief. That creed may not be written; it may not be expressed in black and white; if written, it may be modest and cautious in its phraseology: but it must needs be known and taught. The Bible enjoins that a man shall be able to give a reason for the faith which is in him; but who can give a reason for what he does not have? The thing is impossible; and the position which some churches take on the matter is simply anti-biblical and anti-commonsense. Every church should say what it thinks of Christ; say it implicitly; say it so that the public

can get at its meaning, and be able to intelligently accept or intelligently reject its position. This church owes it to every one of you who worship here, owes it to the city of which it is a part, owes it to God and to the advancement of correct knowledge on the most important of all questions, to distinctly avow its belief; if for no other reason than that its errors may be detected, and its power as an example felt. And I believe that men of all opinions here will at last come to accept this view as the correct one, and insist on its adoption.

The position of reticence and negation, which is held to and held up by some as the only liberal position, and the only one tenable by a progressive thinker, has this, furthermore, to be urged against it: it tends to bring the Bible into disrepute, lessen its authority upon the masses, and loosen all the bands with which it supports and braces the public conscience. The Bible is a book of assertions. It is not a book of suggestion, but of command. It speaks from the high level of superior wisdom and authority. In it is published a system of moral government, the strictness of which is emphasized by rewards and punishment. It does not come to man and say, "Examine me:" it says, "Obey me." It looks you squarely in the face, and says, "Dost thou believe? Hast thou faith?" There is only one way in which to answer such authoritativeness, such directness of interrogation. It is with yes or no. God will not be mocked with evasion, and sly definition, and double-meaning phraseology; nor will he

endure a cunning reticence. He makes confession of our dependence on him obligatory ; and the confession must be full and definite. Nor will the plea of ignorance avail. The path to all needed knowledge is so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

Now, friends, this can be truly said concerning the orthodox churches, — they are frank and implicit in the confession of their faith. They deal honestly with the public. They secure no attendance by accommodating men's crotchets. They bid for no patronage by their silence. They declare doctrines which are harsh and hard to the natural man. Their preachers preach a gospel as it has been delivered to them in the Bible, and not as it has been manufactured for them in Boston. We tell you of a God-Man, — God in the flesh, — Jesus of Nazareth, who died for your sins ; and the salvation we proclaim, so far as it has an earthly locality, comes out of Calvary, and not out of Music Hall. I know of what the American people are made ; and I know, that, upon reflection, they can but admire this frankness. You know what the history of this church has been. I instance it simply as an illustration. Its foundations were laid when the world of theological thought rocked as with the throes of an earthquake. It was built in open and confessed antagonism to prevailing opinion. Its walls were pushed up in the very teeth of the whirlwind of abuse which swept and eddied round it. It was cursed and spat upon. Volleys of argument were delivered at it. The keenest shafts of satire smote against it. The cul-

ture and wit of the city made it their target. Its pastor was maligned, and its members pronounced clowns and bigots. But now mark the result. Did it flinch? Did it modify one of its offensive doctrines? Did it shade down a single formula? Did it pacify the public censure by silence? No! It wrote a confession of faith strong as the Westminster Catechism itself, and nailed it to its front-doors, and said to wit and wag, priest and savañ, "*That* is our belief, and we are not ashamed of it." It fought its fight of faith under the banner of the fathers whose piety made New England what it is, — that banner which is over us to-day, and which, I trust, will fly here forever to the latest generation; and the motto on that banner was, and to-day is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Now, in taking this position, this church, I claim, did two things: first, it honored the Bible; and, secondly, it acted fairly with the public. If wrong in its position, the wrong was more easily detected, and hence less hurtful, because of the frankness of the avowal. If right, it was the more readily perceived, and hence more powerful for good.

I know full well that the charge of bigotry is often brought against the orthodox churches on account of their creeds. This has been the great arsenal from which the Joves of satire have invariably stolen their thunderbolts. The bolt has often been too heavy for them to hurl, and more than once has exploded in their own hands as they struggled to lift it.

Now, I do not doubt, that, in the orthodox churches, narrow-minded men can be found. Indeed, I think I have seen some myself so narrow-minded, that you had to hold them up and look at them sidewise to see that they had any mind at all. Illiberal men, I dare to say, can be discovered among our number, who are harsh and hard in their judgments, bitter toward opponents, and severe against the mistaken. I think that there may be men in this city who candidly doubt whether Universalists and Unitarians are within the pale of possible conversion, and who practically consign them to the mysterious dispensation of God concerning the reprobate, rather than enclose them in the arms of charity and hopeful prayer. Some theologians interpret the doctrine of election, I notice, only in the way of damnation, and not at all in the way of salvation. They make it an awful doctrine, — one to beat men down with, to crush and pulverize them with, and rob all loving hearts of the magnificent hope, that, in the freedom and swing of God's sovereignty, multitudes shall be saved by the unknown operations of the Holy Ghost, and the exercise of that mercy which in measure is infinite, and the outgoings of which are often hidden. I received a note last winter, warning me not to so phrase my devotions that the heterodox and sinners should feel that they could join in that portion of the service intended especially for the saints! Just as if a certain class has the right to monopolize the devotions of the sanctuary, and say to the ignorant, the poor, the burdened, the darkened in mind, "Here,

you stand aside for a few moments ; stop your ears, choke down your sobs, while we professed Christians do a little worship on our own account." That is *bigotry* ; and I hope the person who wrote that letter has been converted by God's sweet grace to more correct and kindly views of sanctuary worship ere this, and feels to-day that all the burdened in the world can say with her, " Our Father who art in heaven."

But, because bigoted and illiberal men can be found in the orthodox churches, it does not follow that they are exclusively found in them, nor in any greater proportion than in other organizations. This whole matter depends a deal upon what definition you give to bigotry. If to believe any truth with one's whole soul is to be a bigot, then most orthodox Christians are indeed bigots, and their creed a compilation of intense bigotry ; for we do most heartily believe what we advocate. And I notice that this is the definition which many give to the term. How false it is, you all know. Intelligent espousal of is not an unreasonable adherence to a cause. Belief in a truth is not blind advocacy. Faith is not credulity. On the other hand, you have doubtless observed that a new definition is given now-a-days to liberalism. To be a liberal, in certain circles, you must have no fixed belief in any thing yourself, nor admit that any intelligent person can have. You must assume that the oracles of knowledge have been surrendered by the gods to you and a few others, and that the rest of the world are incapable of correct criticism and accu-

rate judgment. You must satirize whatever is most sacred and conservative in men's belief, laugh at all conclusions the world reached prior to 1840, and denounce as orthodox bigots such as may think differently than yourself. And a strange thing have I seen and noted since coming to this city. I have seen a liberalism superlatively narrow-minded, and those who denounced denunciation dealing in it the most. Protesting against the shooting of arrows at brethren as barbarous and illiberal, the strings of their own bows are ceaselessly vibrant with the rapidity of their shots.

No ! true liberalism does not find its advocates and exemplars among those who now loudly appropriate this title. Back of all true liberality is a positive conviction ; a sharply-drawn line to deflect from in order to make the deflection worth any thing as a test of temper and charity. A man who yields does not yield at all unless there is in him a strong motive not to yield ; and the value of the courtesy is graduated solely by the effort it cost to grant it. And these theological and metaphysical jugglers, who meet to practise sleight of hand, and toss the problems of life and destiny as players do a ball, for their own amusement ; who yield without giving up any thing ; who say, " See, we grant you all for the sake of free opinion," — when, in point of fact, they never had any downright, well-settled opinion, — are not liberals : they are intellectual shufflers, caring no more for the theories they advance than gamblers do for the pieces of pasteboard that they shuffle so nimbly.

A man who does not care what he thinks himself, or what his boy thinks, or what views society adopts for its guidance, cannot be a liberal; but he who does care, both for his own safety and the safety of others, what opinions prevail, who is intensely interested and wrought upon by what he regards as evil instruction, and yet who treats with courtesy and listens patiently to him who promulgates what he regards as error, is the true and the only real liberal. If this eminently just distinction should be kept in mind, how many a head would be stripped of its stolen plumes, and how many another would be crowned with an enduring wreath!

It has also been said more than once in my hearing since coming to this city, — and the saying has gone out to the world, even to foreign parts, — that the orthodox churches of New England do not allow any freedom and latitude of expression in their pulpits, but fetter their teachers with the bands and cords of old and erroneous interpretation.

If this were true, then would it indeed be a grievous charge, and grievously would the churches answer it. For growth in knowledge is the organic law of piety, as it is a command to it. Knowledge of God expands as the human mind expands; and God will doubtless appear more and more worthy of honor and glory as human intelligence increases through the ages. Apprehension of Jehovah, and understanding of his attributes, are as a stream which widens and deepens its channel as it flows. Every advance in science, every invention in mechanics, every exploration of

the earth's surface, every research of history which brings the tombs of ancient kingdoms to light, every addition to human thought which gives the world richer and fuller forms of expression, will contribute to manifest God more clearly to the intellect and heart of men. Not to fetter and retard, but to emancipate, and assist its teacher in acquisition of knowledge, should, therefore, be the policy of every church; knowing this well, that what they contribute to him in the form of grain will finally come back to them in the form of well-prepared loaves. And this — to encourage their teachers to new and fuller investigation and discovery of truth and the application of it — was of old the characteristic of the Puritan churches. I will recite to you the words of the venerable Robinson to the Pilgrims which he uttered as their pastor as they were about to depart for America: —

“If God reveal any thing to you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go, at present, no further than the instruments of their reformation. . . . This is a misery much to be lamented; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but, were they now living, would be as willing to em-

brace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you remember it, 'tis an article of your church covenant that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God."

This was the spirit of the most advanced of the Puritan leaders in theology; and it will be a fatal day to their successors when they forget it.

Now, my friends, you know that intellectual freedom is the sole condition of intellectual growth. You must give a man some freedom of swing if you wish to get the best pace out of him. A preacher of divine truth, either as it respects the science of moral government or its application to human affairs, who stands in fear of any one, who feels that the pews are watching him to pounce upon some novel form of expressing an old truth or the utterance of a new one, is a man that will never grow. And as the teacher is dwarfed, so will the pupils be. Let the preacher, on the other hand, feel that his audience sympathizes with him in his attempt to push ahead into new fields of thought and expression, let them encourage suggestion as well as deduction, a style of preaching calculated to quicken their own minds to think for themselves, instead of burdening their memories with divisions and sub-divisions, and they will climb together the shining steps of Nature and of God. Their piety will be deep because it is intelligent. It is very easy to mistake ignorant piety for profound piety; just as often, in boating, one fancies the stream to be deep because the water is so muddy that he cannot see the bottom.

Now, what is the position and conduct of the evangelical churches of the several denominations in New England in reference to this matter? With here and there an exception, I believe it to be eminently satisfactory. It has been my good fortune to serve in four strictly orthodox churches of the old type; and never in either did I experience the least embarrassment. The oldest Christians were invariably my warmest friends and stoutest supporters; and I do not think that any one who has often heard me preach would say that I allow myself to be very much cramped in expression of what I believe to be true through fear of any order of men living. And I believe that this is the characteristic experience of all New-England preachers. On the questions of slavery and temperance, the sabbath-school question, the associations of young men, and kindred ones, questions of organization and administration both, touching the very vitals of the Church, running counter to many long-cherished opinions, the pulpits have spoken with a clearness and boldness unparalleled in the history of any other church or people. Evangelical scholarship, also, has been original as well as accurate. It has not contented itself with repeating the formulas of the fathers: it has gladly accepted every discovery in science as soon as it was well established; yea, it has contributed not a little to such discoveries themselves. The variety, the originality, the individuality, of the preaching in the evangelical churches of America to-day, are matters of world-wide remark.

Now, my hearers, churches which have introduced

so many reforms in the last fifty years as the orthodox churches of America have; which have encouraged such students of science as Hickox and Dana and Silliman; which have fostered a pulpit, that, for power, originality, and even idiosyncrasies of expression, is noted the world over, and are to-day giving the highest honors and warmest welcome to the boldest speakers and most independent thinkers, — we say, and do not fear that any will attempt to gainsay it, — we say that such churches cannot justly be called bigoted or intolerant; and those who say it, say it to the exposure of their own ignorance, and the manifestation of their own intolerance.

I have now spoken to you concerning the need and some of the influences of a positive belief. I have striven to meet some of the charges made against those who hold to their convictions in respect to the Bible and God. I ask you, in conclusion, to note the happy effect of a positive conviction upon the nature. It is undeniably true, that we live in an age of great mental activity. A thousand questions of duty invite us to daily decisions. A thousand problems challenge investigation. The age is tempestuous with speculations, and every man is the centre of converging whirlwinds. I do not envy that person who has not lashed himself to some granite column for support. When mental uncertainty has passed beyond a certain point, it is not the source of growth, but of torture. There are mysteries in religion that we can never understand. Never by searching shall we find out

God. In him are depths no thought of man may ever sound. Life, too, is intricate ; and not seldom must we grope blindly, and feel our way along as a blind man feels his way, keeping close to the friendly wall. But, on the other hand, all that is essential for us to know, all that is needed for our guidance and consolation, is within our reach. I urge upon you all, and especially upon you who are young, to be positive in your belief. Base not your faith on ignorance, but on an intimate acquaintance with the inspired volume. Be diligent students of the Word. Scepticism has two sources in our day, -- an overweening pride of intellect, which disdains to sit as an humble learner at the feet of God ; and superficial knowledge of the Scriptures. These are the two fountains of bitterness from which flow waters that quench no thirst, and drinking which you will imbibe fever and delirium. Avoid both ; and remember that no pilgrim ever went to the oracle of God, seeking needed knowledge and wisdom how to live, bringing in one hand humility, and in the other gratitude, as offerings to its shrine, but that received at last, although at first its face was as marble, the needed message. Cold and imperturbable was the countenance of the God at first : but as the suppliant gazed, praying as he gazed, a blush stole over the chiselled features ; the stony orbs returned in love the suppliant's gaze ; the closed lips opened, and the long-sought words of wisdom broke on the listener's ear.

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 9, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT. — CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP: WHAT CONSTITUTES FITNESS FOR IT?
AND WHEN SHOULD IT BE ENTERED UPON?

“THEN THEY THAT GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD WERE BAPTIZED;
AND THE SAME DAY THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM ABOUT THREE
THOUSAND SOULS.” — Acts ii. 41.

REJOICE that many of you in this congregation, enlightened by the Spirit concerning the sinfulness of your natures, and made sensitive to the claims of the divine law upon you, have, by repentance of sin, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, entered into filial relation with God. You have been born in the new birth, — a far nobler birth than that after the flesh. You have begun to live a new life, — the life of faith, of holiness, and, I trust, of joy. You have been introduced to a new world of experience and duty. You are like birds, which, born in vocal bondage, find themselves, after long years of silence, on some spring morning, suddenly endowed with the power of song. A “new song” has been put into your mouths; and your spiritual natures are no longer dumb, but tunefully active. You have not only come

to many new and beautiful exercises, but also to the apprehension of new duties; or, if not to new duties, to duties never until now recognized. Many an obligation hitherto unnoted is now discerned. Judgment and conscience, which heretofore have lain in a half-dormant state, are now thoroughly wide awake. They will never sleep again. Activity henceforth will be their normal condition. The eyes of that censorship which God imposes on our conduct when we become his children are never shut: they glow with the energy of divine discrimination. Their lids never droop: weariness and slumber never weigh them down. They stand open and watchful forever like God's own.

Now, among the first questions of duty and expediency which arise before the converted mind is this of church-membership, — of making public profession of one's faith in God; for the two, in our day, are essentially one and the same. What constitutes fitness for church-membership? and how soon after conversion should it be entered upon? These are questions I propose to discuss before you this morning, in the hope that some of you may be assisted to a fuller understanding of your duty in the premises than you now have.

Before one can ascertain whether he should connect himself with the Church, he must inform himself as to its nature and object. I grant that the performance of a duty imperfectly apprehended is better than no performance at all; but better, far better is it when the duty is clearly apprehended, and the person is

quickened to its fulfilment by a strong, intelligent conviction.

First, then, I remark of the Church, touching its nature, that it is a holy fellowship, composed of people inspired with the same motive of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience to God. The ground and cause of this fellowship is purely spiritual. It is not a mental union nor a social union that unites them, but a spiritual one. They are held together, not by earthly, but by heavenly ties. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," is the key-note of the one song which is breathed from every heart, and that trembles on every lip. They walk in company, clasping each his neighbor's hand, because they are all going one way, all travelling toward the same spot. Amid perils, the danger is in common; in joy, the gladness is felt alike in every heart.

Again: the Church is the agent of God. He has gathered it, not as waters are gathered in inland lakes, and whose highest use is to reflect the heavens, beautify the landscape, and minister to the activities and life bred within itself: he has gathered it rather as water is gathered into a pond, not to remain, but to flow out and be utilized for the good of men; so that the poor bless it for the bread it furnishes them, and the houses it enables them to build. The fellowship of a church is not that of mere knowledge and hope: it is a fellowship in activities and labors and sacrifices; a fellowship of toil and of suffering. Its object is to afford its membership the opportunity of combined effort for the good of others; to organize labor, and

make the energies of each more potent by uniting them to others; to make agencies more efficient by the multiplication of agents. It is only an imitation of the wisdom seen in Nature, which seeks through the principle of combination to produce grand results. Her mountains are composed of individual atoms; her oceans and seas and rivers, of separate drops; the air, by the mingling of many elements; and all her noblest effects are produced by the co-operation of many causes. The Church is not merely a fellowship: it is an organization. Its foundations do not rest on personal election and individual preference, but on the immovable granite of a divinely-imposed obligation. Its object is, not the growth and happiness of its members alone, but the glory of God through the conversion of men.

What, then, let us inquire, constitutes fitness for church-membership? When is a person ready for its fellowship? When is it obligatory upon him to join it, and thereby swell the volume of its organized activities?

I answer, Conversion constitutes the ground of fitness. Every soul born of the Spirit is ready for the fellowship of the Christian Church. The Scriptures are very implicit upon this point, both in the way of terms prescribed and of examples. Repentance and faith are everywhere proclaimed as the conditions of salvation, and therefore of church-membership. And I wish you to observe that these are the *only conditions*. Whoever has repented of his sins, and has intrusted his soul to Christ for salvation,

must be admitted to the sacraments and privileges of the Christian Church *upon application*. This is the only scriptural view that can be taken of the matter. No individual church can justly refuse such an applicant. God has not left it optional with the churches whether they will receive such applicants or not. As it is the duty of all to apply for membership, so is it the duty of the churches to bestow it upon all who have complied with the gospel conditions.

I would, if possible, emphasize this position, because some churches, through their committees of conference, seem to act as if they had the right to elect touching their membership, and pronounce who should and who should not join it. Such should be reminded that it is not their Church, but God's Church, to which the candidates have come seeking admission. It is not *their* table, but the Lord's table, from which the sacrament is served; and it is not such as satisfy *their* demands, but such as satisfy the demands of Scripture, who are entitled to a seat at the supper. The only legitimate subject of inquisition for such a committee, the only authority granted them by the Church, or that can be granted them, on scriptural grounds, is to ascertain whether the applicant has truly and conscientiously complied with the gospel terms, — repentance and faith. If he has, then he must be admitted to that church to which the Spirit has inclined him. Questions that concern the future government of the conduct, questions in theology as a science, questions that do not go to furnish direct evidence for or against the fact of re-

generation, are entirely irrelevant and unwarranted. The only way to go behind the candidate's personal testimony is by doubting his intelligence, or impeaching his honesty. If he is intelligent enough to know what repentance and faith mean, and is not a hypocrite, then must he be admitted to the Church. To keep him a single day from the Lord's table is to debar him of a privilege indisputably his; is to "offend" one of Christ's "little ones." How grave an offence this is, you who are familiar with Scripture know.

I have thus far been speaking more especially of the Church, — its nature and duty. We will now turn the subject round, and look at it from the other side, — the duty and relation to the Church of the converts themselves.

The question is often asked the pastor by those converted under his charge, "When should converts join the Church?" To which there is, as it seems to me, but one reply: "As soon as convenient after conversion." All unnecessary delay is of the nature of sin; and this will be seen when you consider, —

1. That no duty should be neglected.

As I have said, church-membership is not optional to a Christian. "Do this in remembrance of Me" is as much a command as "Thou shalt not steal." Public confession is obligatory upon every disciple. It is made by Christ a test of love, — a test of acceptance at the last day: "He who confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven; and he who confesseth me *not* before men,

him *will I not confess before my Father who is in heaven.*" You see, friends, that I am not speaking along the line of my own fallible judgment, but along the line of God's inspired word; and I pray that the word may be received of you, and dwell in you richly. It is not, as you see, a matter of choice, of mere preference, of personal inclination, whether you who are converted, who feel yourselves to have been born of the Spirit, shall publicly profess your faith or not. You have no election in the matter: God forbids you to have. Duty comes to you, not in the form of a suggestion, but in the form of a command. To defer the commanded action is to prolong disobedience.

2. Experience, as we should expect, favors compliance with the injunction of Scripture. Go to the churches from one end of the land to the other, and investigate this matter, and you will find that those disciples that have not made public profession of their faith, are not united with any church-organization, are stunted in their own spiritual development, and almost useless as co-laborers. Exceptions there may be; but, as a rule, you would find this true. There is something radically defective, friends, in a piety that shrinks from the light of acknowledgment. A man who follows Christ so far off as to refuse to be known as his follower, can do little good, and must do much hurt, to his cause. If one of your children had never been seen in its mother's arms, never stood in your family-circle, never been in your house, never been called by your name, who would suppose it to be your child? And so, if a man never calls himself

a Christian, is never seen amid God's children, or at the family-table, or in the household of faith, who would suppose that he is a Christian at all? The happy, the honored children are those who bear the father's name, and stand acknowledged in his presence. For them provision is made. Their growth is duly ministered unto. They receive the full benefit of the family connection. They become useful. Non-membership is also a kind of denial of Christ. It is one form of opposition. The son that does not acknowledge the father when the occasion demands acknowledgment, denies the father. Every refusal to bear testimony for Christ is a denial of Christ. It is Peter's sin over again, — a sin to be repented of bitterly with tears.

And now, just at this point, I pause in the exposition of the subject to say, If any of you are striving to serve Christ in secrecy, strive no more; for you are striving to do an impossible thing. No follower of his can wear a mask. He allows no soldier without his uniform in his army. The very first step in the line of usefulness is publicity. If you are covering up your faith, if you think you can be his child and not bear his name, you are mistaken. He will disown you, as unworthy of him, at the last day. You are planning to live a Christian life without fulfilling a Christian's duty; and God will never bless you in such an attempt. You are the very person to whom the words of the Master himself apply: "He that is not with me is against me." Do you hear Christ saying this to you, — you who are concealing yourselves

while the battle rages? Can you who crouch and hide yourselves amid the impenitent, and are undistinguished from them, hear the voice, clearer than any bugle, lifting itself up and making itself heard amid the roar of contention, saying, "He who is not publicly for me in this great work, he who fights not openly for me in this critical hour of my fortunes, must be looked upon as being against me: I will never crown any head above which my banner does not float"?

3. Again: the examples of gospel history favor this position.

Two things are observable in Scripture history, — the suddenness of the conversions, and the quickness with which the converts made public confession of their faith. Recall the history of the eunuch's conversion. Directly he was convicted of the truth, he queried of Philip — But I will read the narrative to you, that you may have it fresh in your memories: —

"And, as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Now, mark the reply of the apostle: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

Take Saul's conversion, and the promptness with

which he acknowledged the Lord's mastership over him in the words, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" or the case of the three thousand at the Pentecostal season, who "joined the Church the same day," — the day of their conversion. All point in one and the same direction; viz., that church-membership as an act should follow swift upon conversion. Between the date of one's conversion unto Christ and public acknowledgment of the same there should be no delay, no season of doubt and hesitation. So soon as the babe is born, let it go to the mother's breast.

"But," I hear certain of you inquire, "do you not think it advisable for young converts to wait a while, in order to see if they will *hold on*?" I answer emphatically, *No!* If not converted, see that they wait until they are; but if God's Spirit has begun the work of grace in their hearts, albeit in its inception it be no larger than the "smallest of all seeds," let them at once connect themselves with the Church. If holiness is germinant in them, then give it the proper location and nurture at once. Why, consider this position in reference to the converts themselves. Is not the church-relation a help to Christians? "Certainly," you say; "a great help." Well, I respond, when do Christians need it most? — when young or old, weak or strong, tried or untried? Church-membership is a restraint. What class most needs the influence of such a check? Most assuredly the young, and such as experience has not seasoned into thoughtfulness. When is the conservative influence of a

pledge most beneficial to a reformed drunkard? Undoubtedly, the first few months after his reformation. While his appetite is only partially subdued; his old comrades persistent; his new habit of life unconfirmed; his temptations, because of his surroundings and his inward weakness, many, — then it is that his pledge — the thought that he has solemnly given his promise not to drink — strengthens him, and more than once saves him from fatal lapse. Well, church-membership is one form of a pledge; and many and many a time has it saved the young convert from falling. I have stood on a mountain, sheltered behind its projection of granite, when the winds tore up the very soil, and the young oak-plants and pines were wrenched out of the earth and sent flying, until the very air above my head was darkened with their torn foliage, and fragments of wood, and hissing gravel; and, not thirty feet from where I crouched, an old sturdy oak stood steady and immovable as in the hush of a perfect calm, roaring out its hoarse defiance to the gale that it despised, and saying, “Come on, ye devils of the cloud! ye can’t move me. I have twined my roots around the everlasting rocks; and, while I am vital, no power but that which established the mountain itself can pull me down.” And so it is with you. There are some of you who are young in years, and weak in your virtue. You need protection. Left unsheltered and exposed, you would be swept away. And others of you are seasoned in every fibre: your faith is rooted in the Everlasting, and the sources of ample resistance to the fiercest temptations are

within you; and all I ask is that the churches recognize this difference in the condition of those whom God spiritually has given to their care, and grant protection to those who need it, and when they need it most.

There is one relation to which membership is an introduction, the value and importance of which, to a young convert, cannot be over-estimated. I refer to the pastoral. The pastor of a church is, in a peculiar sense, the convert's friend. To him he can narrate the past experiences of his life and his present temptations with a freedom prompted by a confidence that he is speaking to the official representative of God, whose very position makes him sympathetic and reticent as infinite mercy itself. The confidences that a pastor receives are the most solemn trusts committed to his care. Held sacred in life, they lie down with him in death. Between him and the erring, the weak, and the ignorant of his flock is a bond of sympathy such as is felt in no other circumstance or condition of life. Through it there comes to him that profound knowledge which he needs of the workings of the human heart, the ceaseless energy and activity of evil in the world, and the power of the Holy Ghost. The evidences of man's depravity and of God's abiding love he reads on pages of human experience unfolded before his eyes, — pages that are often blotted with tears, and traced from side to side with the record of sins persisted in and sins repented of: and he receives a wisdom he can receive from no other source; nay, not from the Bible itself. He thus is made wise

in counsel, and capable to advise. By him the ignorant are enlightened, the weak strengthened, the wavering in faith confirmed; and they who came in the very frenzy of despair are calmed and cheered by the replacement of a hope which they thought had faded from their sky forever. There are words that no voice can speak so well as the father's. The paternal character and position are needed to properly emphasize the utterance. Maternity, also, has its sphere; and certain confidences can be breathed nowhere so freely as on the mother's bosom, and beneath the sweet complacency of a mother's face. Friendship, too, has its rank in the economy of beneficence; and love, by its touch and voice, can alone assuage some sorrows. And yet to some, and in certain conditions of life and stages of experience, a pastor can be and do what neither father nor mother, friend nor lover, can be and do. To him as to no one else can the revelation of weakness and ignorance be made. To him can the story of guilt and fear as to no one else be confided. From him, as through the medium elected of God, can come direction, warning, entreaty, and command, as no other one may express it. Speaking as the chosen messenger of God, his words are clothed with a dignity and solemnity derived at once from the character and office of the speaker; and the listener receives them with a patience, attention, and gratitude which the utterances of none other could command.

To this tender, gracious, most conservative of all relations, honored of men, and blessed of God, I urge that converts be admitted at once. When young in

faith, when most sensitive to appeal, most grateful for instruction, and fullest of needs, place them beneath the guidance and loving control of him who in the providence of God, and by reason of his training and office, can be more than father or mother to their souls. Never is a shepherd so truly a shepherd as when he stands amid a multitude of his lambs, and answers their bleatings by scattering among them the herbage he has gathered for their supply. They will love his face. They will love his voice. They will watch for his coming with eager and restless joy. Their growth and well-preserved whiteness will be his daily delight. They will fear him only with the reverence of love; and the days, growing sunnier as they pass, will add to the confidence of the one, and the joy of the other. That Christian who passes the first six months of his Christian experience without pastoral connection loses what all the years of his life cannot make up to him.

“But,” it may be asked, “what if they should fall away, and disgrace their profession?”

This, I respond, can seldom occur if the pastor, officers, and members of the Church do their duty. Why, what is the Church for? For what is its covenant obligation, its pastoral office and relation, its solemn sacraments, and its watchful and loving discipline, intended and adapted, if not to prevent just this danger? For what is all this costly machinery kept up, — costly both in respect to the money and time required to run it, — if not to meet just this terrible possibility? Is not this the mission and express

service of the Church? If it shrinks from this work, if it releases itself from labors by removing the necessity of them when the existence of the necessity is divinely intended to continue, what does it do but thwart the plan of God, and become as useless and uncalled for as a life-assurance society that should vote to admit none to its privileges save such as it was morally certain would never die? And yet some churches seem to act, as far as they are able, upon just this principle; and make, not repentance and faith the terms of admission to them, but such confirmed habits of virtue and solid attainments as cause the examining committee to be morally certain that they, at least, will never backslide. The hospital is filled with patients; but they are made up of those whom the directors have examined, and are confident that they have not a particle of disease about them!

And here I would interject a word or two concerning the character and office of the "examining committee," as it is called.

In the first place, then, the term is a misnomer. It has an inquisitorial significance which does not inhere to the office of the board. It is a committee of conference rather than of examination. Its duty is to confer with and advise the candidates, not "examine" them. The meeting is not one of official inquisition, but of Christian and fraternal consultation. The candidates "examine" the Church in the person of its committee as much as the Church examines the candidates. The interview is one purely of interchange of opinion and sentiment, and not one of

catechism. It should be a pleasant, social, and prayerful season of consultation together.

Again: so far as the conference partakes of the character of an examination, it should be, as conducted on the part of the committee, only touching the *primary* experiences of Christian life. The only possible inquisition allowable is that concerning the acts of repentance and faith. These being assured, the "examination" can go no farther. It is not a place for officers of the Church to air their crotchets; for members of the committee to parade their theological opinions; for the pastor to explain the doctrine of election; or for each and all to define their position on the sabbath question, the sacred-concert *imbroglio*, or the much-discussed and ever-changeful relation between dancing and piety. There may possibly be for unemployed people a place and hour in which these profound problems may profitably be discussed; but they are not found at the conference between the Church and such as would join it. There is a higher and holier office for the committee to fulfil. I have always noted that it is those who are "weak in the faith," and whom the apostle enjoins the Church should not "receive to doubtful disputations," that the brethren on the committee wrangle over the most!

"But suppose they should be mistaken," you say, "as to their experience, and have not been converted at all?"

This, I reply, can rarely if ever happen if the revival is properly conducted. The converts who are

“deceived as to their hope” are those who have never had the grounds of a stable hope pointed out to them. They were converted in a hurry; rushed into the kingdom by the pressure of human hands, amid excitement and groans. Their “experience” consists in physical sensation, the tremors of cowardice, the emotions caused by the picturings of an imagination unduly and unwarrantably excited, — that blackest of all draughtsmen, — and a delirium which took its cue from its surroundings, and which subsided with the sights and sounds that caused it. It is no evidence that a man has wings and can fly because a tornado puts its suction upon him, lifts him up, and hurls him across the street; and it is no evidence that a man is converted because a tremendous physical excitement has lifted him for a moment out of the slough of his bad habits, blown the mud off of him, and crazed him, so that he talks and screams in the language of virtuous insanity. In a well-conducted revival, where the word of instruction is duly honored, and not entirely supplanted by fervid exhortation; where the judgment, and not the passions, is addressed; where God is heard in the “still small voice,” and not in the tempest and thunder of men’s shouting; where the convicted person takes each step deliberately, and only as it is plainly perceived to be a duty, — in a revival so conducted, I say, I cannot conceive that any would be “deceived;” and the converts would come into the Church as buds and blossoms come to a tree, — because the latent stages of floral preparation have been experienced, and the hour of revealed beauty and fragrance has arrived.

But, were this otherwise, what then? Is the probability that a young convert, finding himself "deceived," would live the life of an impious hypocrite for forty years, a very strong one? Suppose a case. Should one of these young girls here discover, after being for six months a member of the Church, that she had been mistaken, and was not a Christian, what would she do? Would she dissemble to her parents and friends; meet her pastor with a lie in her mouth; handle, season after season, the sacred emblems of the Lord's Supper with impious hands? Is this probable? nay, is it supposable? The experience of every pastor in the land controverts this assumption. Case after case has come to my personal notice where these "deceived" ones have approached the pastor with the story of their wretchedness; and being by him more carefully instructed than they had been previously, their personal obligation to God pressed home upon them as none save a pastor, when he stands in such a position, can do, they have fallen upon their knees, and fled for refuge to Him, whom at last, after many wanderings, with joy and the weeping of gladness, they have found.

I ask you all to observe that this theory of "waiting until you see if the converts will hold out" is based upon a wrong idea of the Church, its nature and object. It pictures the Church as a place of ease and security, not of training and effort; whereas, as I conceive, the Church was never intended to be a kind of holy lounge for somnambulent piety to doze and stretch itself on, languidly waiting to be "borne

on angels' wings to heaven," but a gymnasium rather, furnished with all the appliances of spiritual exercise, and where, through wise activity, the members are to have every power and faculty developed until they come to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." When a person joins the Church, he does not seat himself in an ambulance, to remain until the battle is over, and then be drawn into the city of the great King in triumph. No! he takes a musket and a place in the ranks, and marches as he is ordered, beaten on by the burning heat, tormented with thirst; and returns not to his tent until the sun stoops to the west, the enemy fly, and the banners, torn and stained by the lead and smoke of many a previous fight, are furled once more in victory.

The duty, then, resting upon every converted person to publicly join the band of Christ's disciples, is as plain and pressing as is the duty of prayer. Christ himself commands it, the person's own growth and happiness require it, and the world expects it. It is the direct and natural result of regeneration, the seal and evidence of conversion, and the promoting cause of usefulness.

As to *where* you shall go, that is, what church you should join, my advice is, Go where you like to go. This is a matter of pure personal election. Consult your judgment and your inclinations also. Don't be dragged nor pushed. Because God's convincing and convicting truth found you in this church, it does not follow that you should join us here. It may be that some other pastor in this city can feed you better

than I can ; that some other form of worship is more congenial to your taste than ours ; and that some other part of the one great vineyard of which we here are but a little corner can give you work better adapted to your powers and your talents. Consult, in these matters, your own judgment, the voice of your nature, and the necessities of the cause. Go where you will have the best spiritual companionship ; go where you will be the most profited ; above all, go where you most desire to go ; and, wherever you go, *stay*. Some people are like snails : they carry their spiritual home around with them on their backs. You never see them twice in the same church. They are religious vagabonds, forever on the move, and without any fixed abode. Nothing short of death in their family gives them a pastoral connection. It is astonishing how many moribund parishioners the pastor of a city church can have. This is a wretched habit ; and nothing too severe can be said in its condemnation.

At this point, friends, I will pause. I have spoken in explanation of the nature of the Christian Church, and of what constitutes fitness for its membership. I have pronounced against what I regard as certain errors extant in respect to the time and the method of joining it. To me the Church is not a human, but a divine, institution. It is not merely a duty, but the highest privilege, to belong to her communion. Her children have been of the purest and noblest of all generations. Their devotion is the marvel of the

ages. She has never looked in vain for those who would die for her truth. Her martyrs have gone to their death, not reluctantly, but as the unregenerate go to coveted honors. The fame of her deeds and her sufferings illuminates history. For centuries she stood as the only bulwark against tyranny, the sole patron of art, the teacher of letters, and the only hope of mankind. But her brightest day has not come. The glory of her future will be greater than the fame of her past. The orbit of her sublime movement shall never stoop to the horizon-line. A perfect sphere, radiant on all sides, kindling into greater fervor, like the Olympic wheels, as she revolves; more intense and luminous as she moves on, yet never exhausting the divine fervor within whence her beams proceed,—the Church, greatest luminary and sole queen of the moral heavens, will continue in majesty along her course until the vision of the prophet shall be realized, and the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising.

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 16, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—THE RELATION OF SANCTIFICATION TO THE WILL.

“WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.”—
Phil. ii. 12.

IN the passage of which the text is a part, two great truths are stated and enforced. They lie side by side like two parallel ranges of mountains between which runs the travelled road. On the one side is the great fact of God's sovereignty over us,—his power to direct the judgment, incline the mind, and sway the passions of men. It is a vast and majestic truth, whose base and summit no eye can see; for its foundations are laid amid the deep things of God, and its crest is seen only by the ascended. On the other side is the co-ordinate truth of man's sovereignty over himself, less mysterious, but no less worthy of attention. Out of it rises man's responsibility for his acts, and hence the guilt of his misconduct. On it are predicated sin and the justice of punishment. The two do not conflict. They do not intercept nor run counter to each other. The explanation, as I apprehend it, is this. Abstractly considered, God, in his sovereignty, is absolute. There is

no bound, no limitation, to it. He speaks, and it is done ; he decides, and the decree is set. No power can withstand him, no mightiness resist. His throne is from everlasting to everlasting, and the words of his mouth are law. This is the abstract statement, justified both by Scripture and the reason of things. But, relatively considered, it is otherwise. God, as regards man, limits his sovereignty. He withholds it from its ultimate expression. He puts bounds to its exercise. As it relates to man, I say, there is a sphere in which it works, and there is a point beyond which it does not go. He does not work *irresistibly* in us : for, were it so, none could “ resist ” him ; which we know is possible. He does not carry his efficiency so far as to mar our authorship in our own acts ; else would there be no virtue in our obedience, and no guilt in our transgression. When it is said, therefore, that “ God worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” it is meant that he gives us that strength, works in us those abilities, requisite to our willing and working. He pushes his “ working ” so far as to *prepare* us and *assist* us to do either. The fact fully stated, as I conceive, is this, — that we can do nothing without God, and he will do nothing without us. We need his help ; and he will do nothing without the concurrence of our endeavors. He does not will for us ; he does not act for us : we will and act for ourselves. Choice and election are ours. We are not like the victims of superstition, who, bound hand and foot, are cast headlong into the current. Our limbs are free : we can strike out for

either shore we please. Life or death hangs on our own unforced decision. The will is inclined; but it is not dethroned. A thousand motives, like angels, stand round its footstool. Their mouths are full of argument, full of entreaty; but the throne is free to decide. At death, each of you will pass to the bar of God, and be judged as one who has been king over yourself. The face of Satan is black; it is scarred; it is in ruins: but on its dismal front sits royalty, — the power to rule one's self, to elect between the evil and the good. The star is there, albeit its light is quenched; and its rays are but the going-forth of blackness so intense as to distinguish it amid the surrounding gloom.

Now, it is upon the subject of man's sovereignty over himself, or the relation of the will to our sanctification, that I desire to speak this morning; and I do it in the way of explanation and warning to you who have recently been born of the Spirit, to the end that you may not lapse in your efforts, nor fail in such endeavors as are calculated to build you up in true faith and holiness. And I do most earnestly exhort you to listen to what I shall say, and, by meditation upon it, take, in full measure, the profit which God may grant you, through it, to receive.

I remark, then, that knowledge is the condition of growth. The Christian must understand the doctrines of the Bible. This position harmonizes with the prayer of Christ: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." It is not enough to understand a doctrine in itself considered, and by itself:

you must understand it in its relation to and connection with others, or you do not understand it at all. The teachings of the Bible are chain-like; they are linked together: and to disconnect them by ignorance or omission is to destroy that coherence in which lies their value and strength. Take the doctrine of regeneration, for instance: how easy it is to err in reference to it! Many do err. They make it mean more than it does mean. They make it cover more in the scriptural scheme than it does cover. It means being "born again." A regenerated person is one whose desires and affections have been miraculously changed. A power greater than his own has been at work in him, and made him in his wishes and hopes other than he was. In spirit, he is a babe just delivered. The breath of a new and hitherto unexperienced life is in him: he exists.

Now, I ask all these newly-born souls in Christ to remember that they are *newly* born, and only *born*. They are not grown. Their weakness is that of a babe's. They breathe; they exist; they can take nourishment: beyond this, as yet, their strength is not. Growth, expansion, vigor, maturity, — these are states they have not, as yet, reached. These will come only in time, and as they use the provision provided by God through the appointed means of grace. One will be developed more rapidly than another, one arrive at a holy maturity sooner than another; but each will pass through essentially the same process or ever he will come to be a full man in Christ. Regeneration, then, is birth, and only birth. That is all.

What, then, to put it in another way, does regeneration do to a sinner? I reply, It cleanses the essence; it purifies the primal force of the soul: but it does not change the surroundings or the conduct. I will illustrate it.

Take a person who by indulgence of his appetites, by unhealthy diet and riotous courses, has vitiated his blood. He has been a glutton, — a “high liver,” I believe, is the fashionable term, — and gorged himself daily to repletion; or he has been a drunkard, — only he has imbibed in such respectable company and such costly liquors, that the police have not discovered it; and the result is, that his “blood is out of condition.” His veins swell with disease: they are inflamed with the repressed violence of fever. The vital current is vitiated, and labors in vain to purge itself free of its foulness. The physician is summoned. He is skilful. He cuts the man down in his diet; brings relief to his overloaded stomach; restores the blood to its normal condition: the man is convalescent.

Now, what has the physician done? — without the patient’s help, observe. He has purified his blood, I respond, driven out the threatening fever, cleansed it, and restored the functions of the body to a healthy and normal condition. So much he has done. What has he not done? He has not, I reply, eradicated the *causes* of the disease; he has not corrected the man’s appetites; he has not removed the temptation to and possibility of future indulgence; he has not made it impossible for his patient to undo all his bless-

ed work, and become in a year as diseased as he was when he first found him.

Friends, no illustration is perfect. One must not push analogy too far; but this one may help you to conceive what God, in the act of regeneration, does and does not do.

It is an act of purification; an act of divine cleansing. The sinner does not assist at it: it is God's own unaided work. It purges out the fever of sin; it rectifies the spiritual circulation; it drives the blood from the overcharged brain, and enables the man to think rationally; it corrects the judgment by revealing to the subject the causes of danger: this it does. But it does not remove the causes of danger; it does not take the love of liquor from the drunkard, nor hot temper from the passionate, nor the love of money from the miserly, nor the love of show from the vain. These elements of character, these habits of mind, remain, — remain in all their force, to be fought and wrestled with, and overcome at last, like a long-armed and stout-backed foe, by the best effort of our power.

When a soul, therefore, is born unto Christ, it is born unto battle, — battle with itself. Christ has come to it, not to bring peace, but a sword, — a sword that shall smite and cleave. Passion and appetite and lust shall each oppose its sweep, and each in turn feel its descending edge. In regeneration was born, not holiness, but a desire to be holy; and even this desire was at first feeble. Time adds to its height and girth; deepens and intensifies it, until it becomes a

strong and deathless yearning, crying night and day for that which can alone satisfy it, like a mother for her lost child ; yea, and will not be content until it has its arms around the hope of its life. Sweet is it to be born ; sweet is the light to opening eyes that dimly see the glory ; sweet the first breath fragrant with the mother's instinctive kiss ; sweet to the new-born is the sense of touch, and all the sights and sounds of this delightful world : but sweeter far the after-growth, the deepening and ever-widening life, the apprehension of added force, the sense of gathering power deep-heaving as the sea, the dignity of poise and balance well sustained, the free unchecked thought, the mind expanded, and a soul standing proudly on its consciousness like a perfect statue on its broad and well-adjusted pedestal. I recall the hour in which spiritually I was born ; the rush of exquisite sensations, and the deep, trance-like peace : and yet that was, as I now know, an infantile mode of life, and an infantile experience. What Christian of any years, here to-day, would exchange this hour for the first of his Christian life ? Who would cast aside the knowledge of himself and of God's word which the years of striving and study have brought him ? — who surrender his clear views of duty, the fixed resolve, the unwavering faith, the immovable hope, the purified imagination, the confirmed virtue, and all the victories over sin that he has won, for the childlike and fleeting sensation of that natal period ? Not one. The day is better than the dawn ; and better yet the warm decline, — the sky of tempered blue

unvexed by clouds; the peaceful passing of a well-rounded and perfect life, bathed in the glory of the next even before it has passed the line of this present life.

Not only is sanctification in its experience and result better than regeneration; not only is the life of holiness better than the birth thereto; not only is it a process closely connected with our own effort; but it is in development gradual, and in order step by step.

Holiness is not instantaneous; it is not arbitrarily wrought out in us by the Spirit: it is a result reached through a conjunction of the divine influence with our own endeavors. Entrance through the "strait gate" comes through "striving." Our salvation is "worked out." We are not merely recipients of the divine favor, but co-laborers with the Divine Person. The person who does no more than pray for holiness will never make a holy prayer. God clothes and feeds us spiritually, as he does physically, through our own exertions, and in no other way. He who forgets this may force his way into the marriage-feast; but he will be in the same plight as was he who stood with no wedding-garment on.

Not only is sanctification gradual, but there is also a certain order in which it is accomplished; and the order is this: The strongest evil passion or inclination first. If a man is a drunkard, and he is converted, the first thing he wages war with is his appetite for liquor. This is his nearest and deadliest foe; and he naturally grapples first with that. If he has been a man profane in speech, he sets himself to fight this

habit before all others. He may have other evil habits; but the order of sanctification is, the greatest sin first. A dozen serpents may be in his path; but that one whose fangs are already in his flesh, and whose deadly coil is around his limb, is the one he clutches and tears away first. And thus the fight goes on. One sin at a time, one evil habit after another, — each calling for a separate decision, a distinct act of the will, — is dealt with, his strength growing with each effort, until what at first was hard becomes easy, and the will, educated by its own action against evil, grows antagonistic to it, and, in such antagonism, harmonizes with God's.

Holiness is then, as you see, the result of growth. The soul has its gradations and processes of expansion: its unfolding is slow, and regulated by the well-ascertained law of cause and effect. Nature is full of analogies to represent this. Take a water-lily. Did you ever lie on a bank, or sit in a boat, and see one ripen and expand from the bulbous state into the full dazzling glory of perfect bloom? At first, it lies upon the water a light-green lobe, — close, compact, the edges of its yet-to-be-developed leaves seamless, entire; a floral cocoon, within whose dark, dun sides is prisoned a future beauty beyond the splendor of golden-tinted wings. At length, the light, close case begins to swell; the glued leaves let go their hold each on the other; and a pale, whitish streak marks where their bands are loosened. Still more the buoy-like bulb expands; the vital germ, clamoring for the sun, presses against its sides; until the green incase-

ment, distended almost into a sphere, unable longer to endure the pressure, bursts at the top; the parted sections fall back upon the water; and the white globe of almond-pointed leaves, with its rich heart of gold, floats languidly upon the tide. Prodigious of its sweetness, it yields its perfume freely to the passing breeze; and the scented wind, gladly bearing so sweet a burden, wafts it abroad, leaving upon the air a fragrant trail. In this picture of floral development you see the portraiture of that expansion which in the soul transpires under divine processes and management; for, like the lily, the soul at first lies compact in selfishness, devoid of perfume or any feature of loveliness, yet capable of both. At last, the heavens warm toward it, and a germ divinely planted within aspires to grow. Then yearnings are felt; struggles and contests with what represses it occur. The hard, tough incasements of worldliness yield slowly and sullenly to the pressure of spiritual forces within. Yet more and more uplifted by thoughts of its immortality, borne upward also as birds upon a current of air by the wind-like Spirit, the soul longs for and soars nearer to God. Down into it from above continually, come brightness and warmth, ineffable, genial. It clamors for freedom. It presses against the sides of its prison. It refuses to be pent up, contracted, fettered, by its sins. It yearns for light and warmth and the free air of heaven. It persists; it wins: and the sanctified soul, white as a lily at last, with the blood of Christ for its heart, fragrant with the impartments of grace, bursts the coherence of its sins, and floats in

the beauty of holiness on the "river of life." Remember, therefore, all you who are now but so recently born into the new birth, that you are born, not into the state of holiness, but into the state of growth in holiness, and a state of effort for it. You are not ripe as yet: you are only ripening. You are not in flower, expanded, tinted, fragrant: you are in the bud, and will come forward only as the season advances, and the days of deepening warmth are multiplied in genial succession.

In this process of moral advancement, in which the soul marches from one battle-field to another, and from one victory to another, in which each day is one of conflict, and each night demands vigilance of the will, the determining power of the mind is a prime actor. God inclines the Christian to decide rightly; but our decisions are in every sense our own. He reveals to us the right and the wrong in conduct, and there leaves us. He makes the tender; but we accept or reject in absolute independence of action. Volition is unhampered. Decision prompt and unhesitating, on our part, is imperative. He who leaves off a bad habit does it in the free exercise of his own power. Each virtue attained comes in the way of voluntary election. You who are young in years and inexperienced in the Christian life should bear this well in mind. Prayers will never make you holy; longing will never maintain your virtue; dreamy desires will never push on your reformation. Evil will come with its enticements and solicitations: and God will not decide for you; he will not shield you

from the pressure of its invitation. You yourself must "overcome evil;" you yourself must say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" When the Spirit begot you, you were born to be a warrior. You were conceived of God as a contestant. Your attitude as a Christian is martial, and your career is that of a soldier. All this is but a paraphrase of Scripture, and should be taken in all its literal significance. When a man is tempted to cheat, he must knit himself up, and say, "*I will not do it.*" When profanity jumps to his tongue as a tiger at the door of his cage, he must sink the bolts of reticence into their sockets, and hold the ugly thing in. When sin of any kind or degree approaches him seductively, he must rally all the forces of his manhood, recall his vows, bring up in remembrance his covenant, and face it; meeting it squarely, eye to eye, without flinching, until its confidence, which was based on his supposed weakness, departs at the sight of his boldness, overawed and intimidated by the God-like integrity of his soul. This was the Saviour's method,—the way in which he treated temptation; nor will any ever find a better. I have no faith in the monastic conception of holiness, its cause and security. I do not believe that masonry of granite, and doors of iron, can shut out temptation. Temptation is *in* us; and you might as well expect to fence a man from the impurities of his own blood as from the seductive tendencies of his sinful disposition. The mind makes its own sins, and the offspring are of the color and character of the parent. The "warfare" of which Paul speaks is not a de-

fensive, but an offensive, warfare. The Christian's security lies in the suddenness and fierceness with which he attacks his foe. He can never pitch his tent, and unharness, while an enemy remains alive on the field ; which field is his own sin-possessed nature. Then shall he have rest from his labors, and not until then. Then shall peril to him be passed ; the necessity of conflict gone forever with his sin ; and, conqueror at last over himself, at peace with his conscience and with his God, he joins the company of those who have fought the good fight, who have finished the course, who have kept the faith.

You see, at this point, just where the danger lies against which I warn you to-day. Half the attempts men make at reformation are only attempts. They are like boys, who, being on the wrong side of a stream, gather themselves for the spring, but do not jump. They do every thing but *do*. They feel that their conduct is wrong ; that a certain habit is evil : and they decide to change, and leave it off ; but they do not leave it off. They keep saying to themselves, " This is a wrong course I am pursuing ; I will stop, and turn about : " and, all the while, they continue to walk straight on in the same evil way. There are, I fear, scores of Christians in the churches to-day who are living in sin, not because they are not convinced that it is sin, not because they have no desires to live more holy lives, — for knowledge and desire are unto them, — but simply and solely because they will not exert their will ; because they do not put the brakes of resolution upon the flying wheels of their natural

tendencies ; because they will not by one noble resolve make a sacrifice of their selfishness.

This view it is which teaches us that we are responsible for our non-growth in holiness. Our guilt is the guilt of weakness, too indolent to exercise itself into vigor ; of poverty, that seeks not to better its condition ; of the starving, that refuse food. The same measure of effort that men put forth in carnal directions, exerted in spiritual, would make them all saints. God is responsible for the thoroughness of our regeneration. A vital germ must be implanted, a birth must actually occur in the soul, or else the Spirit's power is not experienced. On the other hand, we are responsible for the utmost honesty of effort, the fullest measure of endeavor, and the constant use of every help given us of God to go forward from knowledge to knowledge, and grace to grace.

I have thus far discussed what might be regarded as the principles of the subject. We will now proceed to the application.

Have we, as Christians, sufficiently discerned the intimate connection between the determining faculty of our mind and our sanctification ? Have we been striving to purify our affections without using the solely-appointed means ? It may be that some of you have laid every power and faculty at the feet of God save your power to will and decide : you have consecrated all but that. You are in the condition of ships whose every rope is in its proper place ; every spar and sail duly set, and blown upon by what would be

a favoring breeze if they were judiciously steered: but not one of them has its rudder shipped! They are baffled about; they sail in circles; they make no progress, because they are deprived of their helms. And so it is in the case of many Christians. Their desires are all right; their longings proper; their hopes all face heavenward; their prayers are constant: and yet they are not sanctified; they make, as they feel, little if any progress in holiness; and the reason is, because the helm-like faculty, the directing, controlling, and authoritative power of their minds, the will, is not utilized for God. Friends, this, as you must all see, is a fatal mistake. Many remain in bondage. many in peril. Many walk day by day along the edge of possible disaster, pushed against at every step they take by temptation, who can never deliver themselves until they realize what a divine efficiency there is at times in that little word *No*. Prayers will not save them; neither tears, nor groans, nor the agonies of an upbraiding conscience, nor the advice of many, can save them. Their own decision, driven spear-like to the very vitals of the sin, transfixing it, will alone deliver them from their torment and their danger.

And now, friends, let us be honest toward ourselves. Let us take up, each for himself, in his own hand, veiling its beams under his mantle, the torch of personal examination, and go down alone, unaccompanied by any, into the cellar of our natures. No one has the right to accompany us there. Inspect every nook and corner, and find whatever venomous

thing lurks within that hitherto-unvisited darkness, and flash the light full on its deadly coil. Having found it, beat down with all your force upon its head, and kill it. Let it no more be in you, but be cast utterly away from you. If you have wills, if you are not weaklings and incapables, use them, henceforth at least, for God. But you say, "I have many sins, not merely one: it seems to me as if my nature is alive with them. I feel their movements in me; and I see their traces everywhere." I do not doubt it. But is there not some one taller and stouter than all his fellows, some unbruised sin, brawny and supple, which you have failed to attack as yet? — some one sin, I say, more subtle, more insidious, more vile and polluting, than all beside, which, were you well rid of, would, on the instant, make you a nobler man or a purer woman than you are? If so, that is the sin God makes just now, at this time, more than ever your duty to attack. Now is your mind enlightened, your conscience quickened, your will braced. Lay hold of it, then; take it by the throat, and choke the life out of it. If you want help, if you shrink, and desire an inspiration, I will give it you. *Look unto Jesus*; ay, look into his face, — the face of Him who was in all points tempted as you are; upon which sits, as a crown upon the forehead of a god, the majesty of one who has overcome. Look unto him, and strength shall come to you. Your will will feel the moving of a mighty power within it; your heart will leap; your face will flush as the heart and face of one who has made a great discovery; and you will say

with the old Pauline hopefulness of speech, "Lo, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

But is sanctification the result of disciplinary processes alone? Is it ever instantaneous? ever given in answer to prayer made efficient by the measure of the prompting faith that shrinks not from the asking? My friends, I know not how to answer this; but I would fain think that it might so come. Once or twice I have thought I felt it; but whether I was deceived, or whether I could not retain it, I know not. But, for the moment, earth seemed like heaven; and within me I felt the peace that passeth all understanding. But, howsoever it may come, we all, who are in Christ, wait for it, — wait in hope, not failing to make every effort while effort is possible. By and by, when we lie in the transition, and the gray veil that no mortal hand may ever lift is setting slowly and softly over us, and the sounds of the earth die out, and its sights fade, God grant that then, at least, it may come to us; come as the sense of power and rapture comes to a bird in its first flight; come as of old voice came to the dumb, whose lips quivered into speech at the word of Christ; and on the wings of its coming, and made vocal by it, our souls shall soar and sing forever!

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 23, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—CHRIST THE DELIVERER.

“STAND FAST, THEREFORE, IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE; AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE.”—Gal. v. 1.

I RARELY enter upon the preparation of a sermon, of late, without pausing to reflect upon the manifold mercies that God has visited upon us as a church during the last year. For outward prosperity, for peace and love among ourselves,—truest evidence of the Spirit's presence,—for that sweet fellowship in Christ found only in faithful co-operation, I yield him with bowed head the humble recognition of my gratitude. But above these causes of joy is that found in the conversion of many souls to Jesus. This is to the others what the full-blown rose is to its stalk,—the ornament and crown of its growth, the fragrant proof and expression of the supporting life beneath.

The great and foremost desire of my heart toward you newly-gained disciples of Christ is, that you may become *useful* disciples. I desire that you have right views of God, out of which alone come right views

of duty. I desire that you understand the difference between your present condition and that from which you have been delivered, to the end that you may be happy and hopeful Christians, honoring God by your entire confidence, and advertising religion as a joy and comfort by your rejoicing. Every Christian should make his religion appear so desirable, that all his friends and acquaintances should desire it. I wish, in this discourse, to assist you to realize your indebtedness to Christ; to see what he has done for you, that he may appear excellent and amiable in your eyes, — “the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely:” for I know that out of the sense of great benefits received will spring up in your hearts a great love for the benefactor.

I am to speak of Christ as a deliverer; and I shall mention four types of bondage from which he delivers his followers, and what he substitutes in the place of each.

The first form of slavery that I shall mention from which Christ delivers man is ceremonial observances.

There has been, in all ages, a strong tendency on the part of those to whom religious matters were intrusted to multiply ceremonies. Formalism has ever been the deadliest foe of piety. Ritualism has built up barrier after barrier between the soul and God. The ingenuity of man has been taxed to multiply impediments in the path of man’s approach to the Deity. The symbol has ever been thrust between the inquiring eye and the Being symbolized, and hence all progress toward a true understanding of God checked.

Not only so ; but cruelty of every form has been practised under the sanction of these elaborate systems of men's device. You see the reason of this. Where forms are many, where the machinery is complex, where the ceremony is imposing, where the tradition is dim, human instrumentality is requisite ; the priest, the interpreter, is endowed with solemn and imposing functions. He who moves the pageant, he who holds the key to divine favor, who has the ear of God, is clothed with a dignity, an importance, a sanctity, which would not otherwise be ascribed to him. Where, as a mere man, he would be rejected and denounced as an impostor, as a priest, as the vicegerent of God, as the mediator, he is respected and feared. Back of him is a terrible power ; and men must do his bidding. If he asks for " money," money is given ; if he demands " chastity," chastity is surrendered ; if he even says " life," the devotee mounts the funeral-pyre, or bares his breast to the sacrificial knife. No greater curse has the world seen than ritualism. It has prolonged grosser ignorance, prevented more progress, been parent of more bigotry, smothered more piety, than any other enemy of the soul.

But, when Christ is made known to the mind, all this is swept away. There was nothing he so despised when on the earth as formalism. The ritualists of his day met with no mercy at his hand. He charged them with being hypocrites, who bound burdens grievous to be borne upon men's backs, which they would not touch even with their finger. He said to

them, "Ye block up the gate of heaven against men, in that ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer others to enter." He charged them with making the Scriptures of none effect through their traditions. When Christ came, he levelled every barrier between the soul and God. He told his disciples to "call no man master save God alone." He cut every cord with which the pride and arrogance of men had meshed the soul, and gave it liberty to mount heavenward as a dove escaped from the snare of the fowler. There is not a person in the world, where Christ is known, but that can go directly to God, and, in his own person, present his petition. Access to the throne is free; the path is open and wide; and we can all enter the innermost room of our Father's palace unchallenged.

Another release that Christ brings to the believer's soul is a release from *law*.

The Old Testament is *law*. It is one vast system of legislation: penalty, penalty, everywhere. It was law, not in general, but in detail. It held sway not only over the soul, but over the body also. It told a man what he should eat and drink, whom he should love and hate, whom protect, and whom destroy. It went as a spy into the most intimate and confidential relations of life; dictated affection and marriage, child-bearing, and domestic intercourse. It treated men as mere children. Paul says the "law was our schoolmaster." And well did it deserve the title, in one respect at least; for dictation and the rod were everywhere. But observe further. Note what neces-

sarily grows out of such a system. Where law is, there must be officers to execute it; there, too, are police regulations and the detestable habit of espionage, and all the entanglements, the mortifications, the terror, which follow in the train of complex and severe legislation, — a legislation which seeks to govern personal habits, and shape personal character.

Moreover, such legislation is not only tyrannical, but it is also inefficient: there is nothing in law which quickens and enlarges the nature, and grows it up into the state of self-government. Law, from beginning to end, means repression. It appeals to fear. Its agent is force. Not only so, but it addresses itself only to the acts. It leaves untouched, unchanged, perhaps, the great realm of motives. It has no power to regenerate the character. Judge the system by its fruits. How few characters in Old-Testament history that are worthy of imitation! How few appear in radiance above the dark level of their times! Our average is better than their best. David and Solomon would have forfeited their church relation had that relation been Christian, and not Jewish. Yet they are, in some respects, the best representatives of the system under which they lived: they type its power to reform character; they illustrate the limitations and the feebleness of any legal, any primitive regulation to assist in the development of man's nature.

But Christ came, and all this was changed. Not mere obedience, but love, was made the fulfilment of the law. The divine law had appealed to fear, and

proved its origin by supernatural exhibitions of power. The divine Person appealed to love, — “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments,” — and proved his origin by supernatural exhibitions of mercy. Christ, it is true, did not annul the law ; not a jot or tittle of it was abrogated : but he came to show men, and he did show men, a new and better way to fulfil it, by making obedience easy. The yoke had been galling, and the burden heavy ; but he assured them that his yoke was easy, and his burden light. The New Testament appeals to a class of motives the Old paid little regard to, or left entirely unnoticed. Through it, the Father, and not the Judge, speaks. Christ banished fear from the list of agents on which he was to rely. “Ye are no longer *servants*,” said he to his disciples : “ye are *friends*.” A servant is subject to commands ; and those commands can be enforced against him in case of his disobedience : but you cannot threaten, you cannot punish, a friend ; yet a friend will do more for you than a servant. That is, the class of motives which friendship acknowledges is a stronger, more efficient class than that which mere legal obligation begets. You see how much higher and deeper, how much more profound, how much more efficient, is the philosophy of the New Testament than is that of the Old. Test them by their respective results. Compare the average character of Christians now with the average character of the Jews in their best days. See what love has done, and then compare it with what law did.

The reason, friends, that I object so strenuously to

such representations of Christianity as shall make it to be only a new edition of Judaism, the reason I avoid making appeals to men's fears when urging them to accept of the gospel plan of salvation and life, is because I feel that such a course does not present the strongest motives that can be brought to bear upon men's minds. Such a method of preaching is wrong, looking at it from the standpoint of influence. It is substituting lower for higher motives, weaker for stronger, transient for permanent. It is an attempt to put the chains of the Old-Testament motive upon men; to drive the old and once bloody but now discarded goad of compulsion into them. It does, in fact, Judaize Christianity, and bury Calvary beneath the *débris* of Sinai. A message that frightens and terrifies men is not "glad news;" and no adroitly-turned exhortation can make it appear as such. Some men preach as if they were responsible for the conversion of the world; whereas all they are responsible for is a truthful and candid presentation of divine truth. If I may only unfold the love of God for you, my people; if I can only present Christ to you in such a way that you can understand the feelings of your heavenly Father, and how the Saviour lived and died for you; if I can only lift the veil which sin and worldly habits have thrown over your minds, and cause you to behold the beauty of holiness; if I can only bring your feet so nigh the base of Calvary, that you may see the three crosses of gospel history upon the crest, with the figure of your dying Lord outlined against the sky, — I shall feel my duty is done, and the

message I am sent to deliver has had, through my lips, its proper expression. I am more anxious to set the message before your minds correctly than to make a visible impression. It is not by a succession of tornadoes that God causes Nature to grow and become fruitful: he does not frighten her into productiveness. And the same holds true in his dealings with men. He inclines men: he does not drive. He reasons with them; he convinces their judgment; he excites their affection; he stirs them to gratitude; and so brings them by beneficent supervision, through all the stages of growth, until they are ripe and perfect in sanctified habits and inclinations.

My hearers, you who are not professing Christians, let me invite you to Christ, not as to a judge and taskmaster, but as to a friend faithful and tender, — as to an elder brother. Come, not to put your necks under the yoke of law, but to put your hearts under the influence of love. Come to something better than threat and penalty, better than precept and the letter, better than rule and ceremony; come to life and the persuasions of the Spirit. I do not address your fears: I should despise you if you could seek heaven through fear of hell. I address your judgment, your conscience, your sense of gratitude, your regard for virtue, your desire to be better. These all of you have and feel, because you live in a land where the Spirit works. A heathen does not feel them; but you feel them, because God has poured out of his Spirit upon you. You are like flowers upon which the dew falls and the sun shines. You live in a

gospel atmosphere. God is shining day by day upon you out of his mercy. As the solar beam draws the face of the flower upward unto itself, so heaven wooes you toward its warmth and brightness. You are solicited as intelligent beings by an intelligent Being. Be rational, then : fling not the best chance of your life away from you as a fool might fling away a jewel, not knowing its value. If you are sick, why forbid a physician to enter your house ? If you are blind, why do you shrink from the blessed hand whose touch would give you sight ? Why do you make yourself heathen in your condition when God has made you Christian ? If Christianity enslaved you ; if it broke you down and humiliated you ; if it addressed your cowardice, and thereby advertised its own baseness, — I never would urge it as something desirable upon you. But when I see and know that its object is to make you free, make you more self-sustaining, more noble in every thing that relates to manhood ; when I know, from its experience in my own life, that it can convert your weakness into strength, refine your grossness, sweeten your acidity, and make your barrenness to be fruitful, — I can not and will not forbear. You must become Christian, or arm yourselves weekly against my importunities.

Christ not only delivered men from the fear of the law, but he delivered them also from the bonds of superstition. There is no greater curse than this. What the worse form of human chattelism is to the body, superstition is to the mind and soul. A superstitious mind is an enslaved mind. It is in bondage

to an overwhelming fear. No price is too costly to purchase escape from its terror. Natural affection, even, is trampled under foot; and the mother becomes less thoughtful of her babe than the tigress of its young. The brute will brave death for her cub, and, with the hunter's spear in her side, die caressing her young; but the mother, under the terrible spell of her superstition, forgets the ties of blood, and flings the babe at her breast into the Ganges to appease the anger of its god. Behold the car of the Juggernaut! Its wheels are massive, their periphery vast; yet every inch of their circumference is stained with human blood. How many centuries did its wheels revolve! How often, enthroned in horrid state, did Superstition ride along a path paved with human bodies to its triumph! How have men gazed and gazed upon its awful front, wrought by rude carving into fantastic shapes and figures monstrous, which ignorance had deified, and then, seeing, as they thought, a glimpse of heaven beneath its wheels, cast themselves under their bloody tires! But this is not the only form with which Superstition expresses itself, and wherein its evil is shown. The mind is as a city, — circular in form, and with gates opening out in every direction: every gate is possessed by the enemy. Judgment, conscience, affection, timidity, courage, — Superstition seizes hold of every faculty, and reduces them all to her merciless sway. Her servant and ally is priestcraft: they go together, — confederated robbers of human rights and human joys. Where these are, farewell liberty, farewell

progress, farewell piety! They represent cruelty, arrogance, tyranny. The Juggernaut and the Inquisition; the one-man power seeking to protect itself from the hate and satire of men behind the bulwark of infallibility, — a dogma which “Punch” could laugh out of existence in half a century, — these are the result of superstition. To these, men had been in bondage, — a bondage which cramped their power, and withered all their sinews; which made science impossible, piety something to be dreaded, and excluded liberty from the vocabulary of human speech. From these Christ came to deliver men: from these he has delivered all those who have believed on him. The first thing that Christianity does is to remove from the mind ignorance, credulity, pride, and all the co-ordinate causes of superstition. It represents a thorough horticulture. It takes hold of the evil, and pulls it up by the roots; threading it out to its last fibre, until there is not even a filament of it left. It brings freedom to every faculty of the mind, — to inquisitiveness, and science is born; to reason, and philosophy appears; to imagination, and “Paradise Lost,” that genesis and revelation of song, is written. It quickens all the germinant capabilities in the bosoms of men; starts to action every dormant aspiration; and as the consummate flower, the blossoming of all precedent growths, civil and religious liberty unfold their loveliness — which so many of old desired to see, but died, being unable — before the world’s admiring gaze.

All hail, then, to Christianity, who comes as the

emancipator both of the minds and the bodies of men! Hail to that system of truth, in the atmosphere of which no slave can breathe; in which the strongest fetter melts as ice smitten by the rays of the summer's sun! Hail to that Christ, the Anointed of God, — equal in essence to the Father, and revealer of his love, — who is walking over the earth in power, visiting every barbarous tribe, every enslaved race, with the proclamation of their emancipation in his right hand, and the guaranties of their rights in his left! Behind them, and on either side, Plenty appears. As he moves on, groans are changed to sounds of joy; and the spear which cruelty had pointed for the human breast is driven into the ground!

My friends, can a system which works such results be overturned? Will the suffrage of the world, think you, vote against the evidence of the senses? Will civilized America vote down her magnificent social and religious system for the polished barbarism of ancient Greece? Will a nation that has drunk from the fountains of divine truth, that finds the water their fathers drank still sweet and nourishing, ever give up the New Testament, and adopt the dialogues of Plato and the maxims of the slave Epictetus for their divine books? Such a suspicion is an impeachment of men's sanity. Now and then, an ill-balanced, idiosyncratic person, puffed with the harmless conceit that he may yet be the Socrates of Boston; who lost his common sense in some old German library, and failed to find it again when he bought his ticket for America, — some such person, possibly a dozen:

such persons, may be found pervaded with such a dream; but the people, as a body, care nothing for their theories or their predictions. Such individuals have their use also. They serve to illustrate the largeness of that liberty which Christianity has secured for them.

The fourth and last deliverance that I shall mention, which Christ wrought out for man, is deliverance from the fear of God. Of course, there is a sense in which a Christian fears God, even as there is a sense in which a child fears a loving and dearly-loved parent, — a reverential, holy deference for his authority. But this is not the fear which terrifies and distracts, which debases and makes servile. When the fatherhood of God is fully apprehended, — a relation which not one in a dozen Christians adequately realize; when the filial bond is felt as a child feels the clasp of the mother's supporting and guiding hand; when adoption is not a mere mental conclusion, but is lovingly and constantly evidenced by the Spirit in the soul, — then fear has no foothold in the heart of the disciple; then upon his face rests the light of implicit trust; and the look of his eye is the look of unquestioning love. Well did the apostle John declare that "*love casteth out fear. . . . He who feareth is not made perfect in love.*" May God forgive us our unbelief, out of which our timidity, as a dwarfed child from a sinful parent, comes!

My friends, ponder these things. Be more thorough in your habits of analysis. Love and fear are exact opposites. They cannot exist together in the soul in

its outgoings toward one object. A babe fears a stranger; but who ever knew a babe to fear its mother's face? Put a father and his little son face to face, and is it possible that either could fear the other? And yet why not? Because there is love between them: every malevolent temper is exorcised by the charm of this sentiment. But some other man that son might fear: or if his father should meet him in some lonely place, and in such darkness that he could not recognize his face, I can conceive that he might fear even his father, because he would not know that he was his father, but suppose he was some other man, — perhaps a cruel man and a foe. Well, very much like that it was once between men and God. God met men in darkness, and they did not know his face: they did not know who or what God was at all. They saw his works, and knew that he was powerful and wise and vast. On every hand they saw such elements connected with cruelty. Whoever had power used it to work his will on his enemies, enslave the weak, and lord it over the poor. Power meant, in those old days, disregard of justice, license, cruelty, and every kind of wicked indulgence. Reasoning from analogy, God would use his power to satisfy his own passions, and carry out his own selfish plans. Hence men feared God, — feared him as a slave feared his master, as a soldier fears his general, as a courtier fears his king. That God was king, they knew; but, that God was their own dear father, they did not know, and had no means of knowing.

At last, Christ came. Came for what? *To reveal the Father.* In Christ, God *manifested* himself. In him men saw the will of God revealed, and all the paternal sentiments of his heart were made known. And when Christ, in the results of his life and death, is received of the soul; when, through the lens-like medium of his words and acts, our eye being undimmed by prejudice, by the harshness of traditional interpretation of Scripture, by physical disease, we see God, — doubt and terror are removed. No more do we shake, no more tremble, as we think of meeting him. No more is the grave dismal, but is as the doorway of a palace through which the children of a king pass to kiss him on his throne. No more is the valley of death a valley of shadow; for a marvellous light, unlike that of the sun, fills it and floods it; and the valley is full of radiant forms; and all who pass into it are on the instant changed, and become radiant as themselves. And in the joy of their surprise they begin to chant; and hand linked in hand, wing infolding wing, they go forward singing, “O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?”

This is what Christianity does to the soul in its relations to God. A believer is called a “child of God.” Beautiful name for a lovely relation! Christians are regarded in heaven as “heirs and joint-heirs with Christ.” There is no alienation, no estrangement, between believers and the Father. We have been brought nigh and reconciled by the blood of Christ. “Brought nigh”! “reconciled”! — think

what these terms imply. The love between God and his children is a reciprocal love, a sincere love, a fearless love. There is nothing, no stroke, no calamity, "neither life nor death," as Paul insists, can sever the cords that unite us with God. It is not a contingent love : it is a love not born of circumstance and temporary condition. The child errs, disobeys, revolts, hides himself from his mother's face for years ; but he loves his mother still. The mother loves her child still. Their love is a love born of begetting and being begotten. It began with the child's birth : it will endure after the child and mother are dead. For love like this, being not of flesh and blood, but of the spirit, cannot perish. It is immortal. So it is between God and his spiritual children. The Christian may err, may revolt, may wander from God : but there is no distance, no rebellion, no lapse, that can sever the renewed soul from the Author of its regenerated life ; for the Lord is able to keep such as have given themselves into his care.

I do not say that this is done without the employment of agents and means ; for it is not. But this does not affect the result. The mother is not less the preserver of her child's life because she does it through the agency of food and clothes and medicines. The Christian is *kept* : let that suffice.

Now, then, I say, in view of all this, — of what God is, as revealed in Christ, — it is impossible for a Christian, properly enlightened by the Spirit, to fear God, — as impossible as it is for a child to fear a loving mother. We might fear the condemnation

for sin ; “but there is now no condemnation.” We might fear death ; “but the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.” “But now we are delivered from the law,” as Paul says ; “that being *dead* in which we were once held.” We might fear the grave ; “but, if the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.” We might fear lest we had not been renewed ; but how can we, “when the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we *are* the children of God” ? “What shall we say, then, to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us ?” If, as the last resort of a timid soul, you forebode the future, and cry out, “At least I cannot but fear the judgment,” I respond in the words of Scripture, — words that cover the whole ground, — “It is God who justifieth.” And so cloud after cloud melts ; the blue grows upon the eye as it gazes ; and the sky upon which the dying believer looks is cloudless.

I have thus, friends, spoken to you in exposition of the four kinds of bondage from which Christ delivers man, — the bondage of ceremony, of law, of superstition, and of fear. In view of what has been said, may not Christ, with justice, be called the Deliverer ? If it be a praiseworthy deed to publish freedom to the slave, to carry liberty to the down-trodden and oppressed, as history has universally taught it to be, in what form of speech can I fitly express the claim of Christ to the gratitude of mankind ?

Who, — tell me, ye students of history, — who has broken so many fetters, levelled so many thrones builded on injustice, redeemed so many human beings out of direst bondage, as He whom we here, every one of us rescued by him, call our Saviour and Redeemer? Go to once heathen lands, and behold how he has given knowledge to the ignorant, ennobled life by teaching man its noblest use, introduced an immortal hope into the bosom of despair, and upon thousands that were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death caused a great light to arise and shine. Has done it, did I say? nay, he is doing it continually. Not a day passes in which he does not repeat his past efforts, and multiply his triumphs. Around him, as he marches, victories accumulate; and the path along which he walks is strewn with the shattered shields and overturned chariots of his foes.

It is not the dying, but the living, not the buried, but the risen, not the captive, but the victorious Christ, that you have chosen as your Lord. The hours of his debasement, his suffering, his death, have passed. Never again will men mock him; never again will the scourge touch him; never again will a sepulchre hold him, even for an hour. To-day he is exalted. The glory that he had with the Father before the world was is his again. To-day he sits regnant over thrones and principalities and powers: they lay their crowns around his feet; they prostrate themselves in loving homage. The highest in heaven deem it an honor to praise him.

Do you say, "This is too vast. I have no standard by which to gauge such dignity. You put my Saviour too far above me, — too far away. Sketch me some other picture. Let me see his face as the face of a man, only ennobled with the spirit of a God. Let me hear him speak in tones that can enter the ear. Let me touch him; at least, lay my finger on the hem of his garment"?

Behold, then, your Saviour! He stands like a statue vivified and animate. His feet are on a rock. In either hand he holds a scroll. On one is traced the Golden Rule: upon the other I see these words, "On earth peace." Suspended across his breast are the beatitudes. His face shines as the face of an angel in the act of gazing at God. Around his feet lie the dying and the dead. The dead look like those who have fallen asleep in peace: the lips of the dying suggest the presence of a smile. Afar off is a great multitude of men and women, each carrying some load. To these he is speaking. Oh, blessed be God! what words are these I hear? — "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." This is *your* Saviour, friend. What do you say to him? Say, "*My Lord and my God!*"

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 30, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—DIVINE JUSTICE.

“JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT ARE THE HABITATION OF THY THRONE.”—
Ps. lxxxix. 14.

I WISH to speak to you this morning upon the justice of God, or divine justice. Not a few say that many of our pulpits are cautiously reticent upon this subject, and that they preach of the mild to the exclusion of the severe virtues of God. I desire that none should be able to truthfully say this of this pulpit; at least, while I am in it as a preacher. I believe in the Fatherhood of God, as you all know; in his love and mercy and compassionate feelings toward us all: yea, I believe in these so fully, that I believe in his *justice* as well. For no one, as I look at it, can ever adequately comprehend the greatness of God's love, who does not hold, with all the forces of his heart and mind, that justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. What I have to say this morning, in expanding my theme, may be grouped under these two heads:—

1. The justice of God as an element of his government; and,—

2. As a rule of his conduct.

When I speak of the government of God, you must please remember that I use it simply to aid the conception, not to make any distinction between it and God himself. God is his own government, both in its principles and its administration. The President of the universe is without a cabinet. No councillors sit with him; no adviser is called to his side; no division of interest exists to provoke differences in that heavenly nationality. No opposition, even in thought, is tolerated or dreamed of. Among the intelligences that people the invisible world, there is but one throne; and before the glory of that the highest archangel veils his face. Throughout the whole universe, over stars, systems, and worlds, one sceptre rules. On the bounty of one Supreme Benevolence all animate beings feed, and to the authority of one Central Will all modes of life are subject.

The government of God is thus shown to be nothing less than God himself, and the elements of it the very essence of the Deity. With a Being thus omnipotent in his power, and unrestrained in his exercise of it, by whom all differences must eventually be decided, and the destiny of every living creature fixed, what would naturally and properly be the predominating principle? What would be the corner-stone first laid, and upon which the whole vast superstructure rests?

Before we hastily answer this question, let us call to mind that the government of God has for its subjects two widely-different classes of beings, — the just

and the unjust, the loyal and the rebellious. This is indisputably true, and changes the complexion of the entire case. If any inquire, "How?" I reply, In this way: Were all the subjects of God's government pure and right-minded, the severe virtues of God would have no occasion for exercise; the terrors of the law would lie unmanifested, and the bolt hidden in the bosom of the cloud, and God, in the company of his own pure beings, could lay aside his harness, and rest in the security of untempted innocence. In such a society, where there would be nothing to restrain, nothing against which to guard; where, through the lapse of vast ages, nothing would occur to ruffle the serenity of the Divine Mind, or disturb the quiet of God's kingdom,—love and the milder graces would, undoubtedly, be in the ascendant. But such is not the case. The reverse is true. So far back as human annals extend, or inspired narrative reveals, evil has contended with good; and God, as the arbitrator between the two, has been kept day by day on the alert. How active the divine energies must constantly be to decide the countless questions of rectitude as they hourly arise! How keen and keenly alive must be the sympathies and the antipathies of God! That you may realize how intensely active are the discriminating energies of Jehovah, mentally estimate the occasions, both past and present, calculated to tax their closest exercise. Consider first in time as in significance, the fall of the angels.

I make no attempt to explain the mystery, how beings once pure, sinless, and beyond the reach of guile,

could by any means so far have declined in virtue, that their celestial natures, imbittered, lost their lovely characteristics, and became utterly depraved. But so it was. The fact is recorded, that for once at least the hills of heaven resounded with war; for once, intestine strife rudely disturbed the tranquillity of the skies; for once, the chariot of God was harnessed for battle, and the Eternal defended with his thunders the stability of his throne.

The conflict was joined, the rebellion crushed; and God stood victor on that awful field. What were his sentiments? What did he do toward the rebellious? You all remember. No false sensitiveness distracted, in that hour, the decision of God. No maudlin pity wept over thwarted devils, or pleaded the greatness of their temptation to mitigate their fall. Their sin was premeditated, their rebellion outrageous and unreasonable. Hell, whatever of punishment that may symbolize, was excavated for the emergency; and into it they were flung. Thrones and principalities and powers once radiant, who walked amid the applause of heaven, went out in darkness. They faded; they fell: and God's loyal ones lifted up their voices to indorse the justice and wisdom of the award.

Thus the earliest data we can gather of God, the first exhibition of his government made to the eyes of men, is found to be unhesitating, impartial, and inflexible *justice*.

The next historic exhibition we have of the Deity is his action in the case of our great progenitor, Adam.

You know the circumstances of condescension on the part of God which attended the introduction of our common parent into life. As one reads the narrative of the creation, he cannot but be impressed with the thought, that the birth of man was a favorite conception of the Divine Mind. Actively entertained as an idea ages before the consummation, vast periods of time had been employed to create a sphere worthy of his faculties. Whatever creative ingenuity could advise, or energy effect, was done; whatever element could forward the undertaking was drafted into the divine work. Every result lovely to the eye or pleasing to the senses was produced, until such a harmony had been reached in taste, color, and sound, that God himself was satisfied. He paused in his work, looked, and said, "It is very good," — superlative praise from superlative wisdom to pronounce it.

At last, man, the crowning work of all, so far as physical beauty and powers of adaptation go, and endowed with intelligence like to God's in kind, was placed upon the earth. For this superior being a suitable home had been made ready, and to him all life was made subject. Thus located, surrounded by all he could desire, and the favorite of Heaven, Adam, as the child of God, began his existence. One command alone was laid upon him, trivial in all respects save as a test of his obedience. This injunction he disobeyed. In full maturity of his manhood, he yielded like a silly child. What followed? Must this man, who had only yielded to the persuasions of love; who had only complied with the prayer of her

given by God himself to be his companion, — must this man, in the creation of whose dwelling so many ages had been expended, and so many resources taxed; whose birth brought joy to heaven, and delight to God; whose parentage linked him as with ties of blood to the celestial orders to whom he and his would one day be united, — must this man, for this one disobedience, this one slip, fall forever, be exiled from the home so expensively fitted up for him, lose his high prerogatives, his heavenly associations, and go down at last like a mere animal into the dust? Could not, would not, God, for once, modify this ruling, and let his favorite begin, as it were, once more anew? Surely, if God is, as some argue, too merciful to condemn, too benevolent to cast man aside, imperfect though he be, here was a golden opportunity for him to exercise such benevolence. Here was a chance to forgive such as even he would seldom have. Here he might make an exhibition of himself that would bring hope to a despondent world. But, my hearers, what did he do? I answer, He did just what he said he would; what in every such case and circumstance, past, present, and to come, he has done and will do. The justice of God had been tampered with, its righteous and salutary ruling disregarded; and though all the heavens should plead, and the angels fill the skies with lamentations, the penalty must follow. The word of the Unchangeable had gone forth. The universe had heard and made note of the proclamation; and now it looked to behold what would follow. Nothing less than the veracity of God, you see, was on

trial. Would he keep his word? would he consign his favorite to death? would he abide by his own ruling? Such were the whispers that filled the universe. Do not suppose this picture poetic and improbable. The angels know more of God now than then. Calvary showed them how he loves justice. When "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up," that he might be just, and yet the justifier of the unjust, heaven for the first time felt the inflexibility of its King. In the agony of Christ, angels read, and trembled as they read, the virtue of God. In the death of the Only-Begotten, they beheld the enduring wrath of Jehovah against sin. The dying groan of Christ not only rent the earth, but filled the universe with an infinite conviction.

And so, for the second time, did God make a revelation of himself; and justice again, you see, stood revealed as the underlying element of his government.

This proof from history might be continued by many references, and, in each case, be conclusive: for what God has done is only what he will forever do in like circumstances; for he has done nothing but what is right, and from that he cannot vary.

I instance but one more case; to it I have already alluded, — the death of Christ, its relations to the justice of God.

At the coming of the Saviour, a crisis had been reached in the history of the race. Man, through the baseness of his degeneracy, was fast losing his natural superiority over the beasts of the field. His spiritual perceptions were darkened; his social life was corrupt

to the last degree ; and his tendencies, with each successive generation, were growing more and more gross. Surely something must be done. Now, if ever, is his condition to be improved. Surely it cannot be that God is wanting in mercy, or that pity is a stranger to his breast. "Can the angels behold us, and not be grieved?" men might exclaim. "Are the eyes of our Father blind that he cannot see the misery of his children, or those who live beyond the stars too distant to hear our cry?" No: the eyes of the Deity are ever open, and his mercy pleadeth for all.

Lost and ruined as they were, God still loved the race: the patient Father yearned over his wayward children, and decided that they should be redeemed. But there stood his law; it had been broken: there stood his executive energies; they had been defied. How might the one be satisfied, and the other appeased? An easy matter, indeed, as some judge of God; an infinitely-difficult problem, as the solution proved. For when the mind of God began to cast about, if I may so express it, to ascertain what would satisfy the judicial element of his government, and make atonement to the transgressed and insulted law, what and how much was found to be necessary to satisfy? Would repentance in man suffice? if so, why was not that alone enjoined? Would the pleadings of all the angelic orders, though they had prostrated themselves before the throne, and supplicated forgiveness for man, have availed? If so, why was not that attempted? Could the love of God itself, and the sweet importunity of his mercy, have persuaded the

judgment of the Eternal? If so, why was another manifestation made? No, my friends! Ye who love to know what God is, observe how, unpersuaded by the repentance of men, deaf to the prayers of the angels, back of love and mercy stood the judicial element of Jehovah's nature, — an element by which all other of his attributes are regulated, and on which all the doings of his vast administrations are builded. This element is justice. It spake; and well might the mansions of heaven become silent as the grave as they listened to the greatness of the demand. The glory of no angel was bright enough, that by his debasement atonement could be made; the life of no potentate, the exaltation of no throne, through all the spiritual empire, was valuable or lofty enough, that by their death and fall man might live. The element of the divine nature spared not its own. The violated law appealed to Justice for an ample vindication; and Justice, lifting its hand above powers and principalities, pointed its finger at the Son of God. Its demand was complied with; and then, for a third time, a manifestation of divine justice was made, such as the thrones of heaven will never forget, nor the depths of hell fail to remember. The angels saw what they had long desired to look into, — the nature of Jehovah; its holiness, its hatred of sin, and its mercy. The universe felt safe; in God it saw the bulwark of its protection: and hell, which had lifted itself for a season in hope of a partial victory at least, fell back into its own waves, stricken with the paralysis of utter inability to cope with the Eternal.

We will now consider, in the second place, the justice of God as the *rule of his conduct*.

I must ask that all of you remember that God rules over an *intelligent* universe ; over worlds inhabited by beings of moral capacity and intellectual power, and capable of vast development. From this it follows that the doings of God are looked upon by intelligent spectators, and that innumerable eyes are fixed in steady inquisition upon his movements. That such inspection is consistent with the highest reverence is seen in the fact, that God, in the revelation he has made of himself, has invited it, and that it occurs in strict sequence from the possession of the powers he has bestowed upon us ; for he certainly would never have given us the impulse and the guiding thread, had he not wished us to push in and explore the labyrinth. My conception of the universe, therefore, is of a vast amphitheatre, from whose star-lighted galleries, rising row on row in radiant succession, innumerable multitudes in thronged admiration contemplate with ever-increasing delight the marvellous doings of Him “for whom and by whom all things consist.” The subjects of God’s authority are thus seen to be contemptible neither by the smallness of their capacity nor the brevity of their existence ; for they are created in his image, and insured against whatever accident by their immortality.

You will please also note, that, so far as man is concerned, the subjects of the divine government are at present either in a state of alienation from or of progression toward the status of perfectly sinless beings ;

that human life is intended to be, and in fact is, nothing more than a disciplinary stage and test; and that, concerning man's fitness to enter the next higher grade, when he shall, by the conditions of his mortality, pass from this, God, necessarily, is himself the sole competent judge. You at once see how profound must be the interest that the All-seeing must take in our every act, and how constant and discriminating must be his arbitrations in reference to us.

In such a multitude of cases, where thousands of decisions are daily being made, — decisions which are final, and on which the fate of undying existences eternally depend, — whoever pretends to judge must be guided, not by impulse, nor by accidental emotions, but by certain fixed and immutable principles of right. The judicial renderings of this tribunal, at least, must be based on laws and maxims of rectitude beyond cavil; and this insures two things: —

1st, That no decision will go beyond or come short of justice.

2d, When once published, it can never be revoked. From this supreme court of the universe, held only by the Chief Expounder of universal law, there can be no appeal: from the highest it cannot be carried up to a higher, nor from the wisest may it be adjudicated by a wiser.

You now see how in strict sequence follows this conclusion, — that God, being such as he is, and the universe such as it is, the claims of justice must be strictly and clearly complied with before the milder virtues of his character can find opportunity for ex-

ercise. Sin, of all degrees, does so hurt the inherent virtue of God, and resist his righteousness, that the integrity and perfection of his nature cannot stand unless he vindicates and satisfies the judicial element of his government. The executive energies of God can no more fail to vindicate the rectitude of his decrees by enforcing them than a sheriff can remain faithful to his oath, who, out of pity, refuses to commit a condemned prisoner to jail. The decisions of the Divine Mind are no less sure to be executed because God himself is his own executive. The Eternal cannot rebel against his own nature, or refuse, under whatever stress of circumstance, to enforce his own long and clearly published decrees. God cannot be false to himself, and remain himself. It was this consideration which shut the gates of Paradise against our first parents, and barred them forever to us, their children. When he had once decided upon the penalty of death as the fitting award, should Adam disobey his command, death, and nothing short, must inevitably be Adam's fate after he disobeyed. To obey or transgress was, with our first parents, optional. The fullest ability to do either was necessarily theirs ; but, once having transgressed, nothing short of the annihilation of God's essence could prevent the penalty from being inflicted. Thus it came about that Adam was ejected Eden because of his disobedience ; and on him, and on all his descendants, spiritual alienation and death fell. The eternal principle of God's government had been violated, and his inward virtue outraged ; and the essential ele-

ments of either held him to a strict execution of the sentence, in order that his authority might be vindicated, and the grievous slight put upon his nature made good.

My friends, centuries have multiplied themselves into ages since the day Adam's sentence was pronounced ; but each, as you all know, has borne witness to the veracity of the record. Generations have followed each other in countless succession, and successively have the pomp and pride and beauty of each vanished away. The mausoleum of kings, sculptured with the record of proud deeds, the world to-day notes little of ; and the neglected graves of the unhonored bear mournful but indisputable witness to the impartial execution of the decree. Nay, we, even at so vast a remove, stand under the shadow of the old curse, and demonstrate the immutable justice of God by every grave we dig. The cloud rests over us yet ; and on us and on our children still descend pestilence and death. Like exiled Adam, we, too, still stand and gaze back upon our Eden, before whose barred gates a worse than flaming sword waves either way.

In the iron grasp of the Eternal's government, more difficult to be relaxed than to the ante-Christian age appeared the relentless hand of the Fates, do we, therefore, as individual transgressors of that government, to-day stand. Between the decisions against sin, of the Supreme Will of the universe, who asks not our assent to his decrees, and our repeated and persistent dereliction, are we held as in the clamp of a vise. An

infinite and inexorable pressure is thus brought to bear upon our souls. Under the ponderous mountain of our own guilt, which the inflexible justice of God cannot lighten by a single ounce, are we all, left to the workings of a just and holy law, being slowly yet surely crushed to death. The pressure is but slightly realized in this life: but each year, like the revolution of a screw, adds to it; and, operated through infinite ages, the closeness of it will finally become unendurable.

What chance is there, then, for man to escape? I appeal to every impenitent and thoughtful man present, and ask him to point out, if he can, some path by which to run from underneath this overhanging and slowly-settling doom. If you take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, what will it avail? Lo, and behold, God is there! Into what depth can you plunge, or into what height can you mount, or in what darkness crouch, where the decision of God will not find you? In such a flight of conscious guilt from deserved punishment the feet of terror itself would lag like a snail's, and the darkest midnight be illumined with a radiance greater than that of a thousand suns: for the justice of God is as a circumference round about sin; and the sinner is, and continues to be, wherever he goes, the movable centre of tortures, out of which he can never, of himself alone, escape. There is no mask nor mantle that can conceal the face of guilt from the clear gaze of God. The timid and the bold, the pure and the vile, must meet him at last, eye to eye.

If, now, neither distance nor space, nor lapse of time, can shield you from the wrath of a holy God, which he must feel while he remains holy; if at every turn you make, like a wounded and frightened deer, you run against your foes, and are brought to bay; if neither your powers of body nor inventive cunning can break through the deadly toils; if you cannot save yourselves, and the hour draws nigh in which you will stand face to face with the penalty, — what will be the result? I hope you who are impenitent in this audience will look this matter in the face; for it will do no good to shut your eyes, and refuse to see what is so undeniably drawing near to you.

I can imagine but two possible contingencies. I would gladly mention others did they exist.

The first is, that God will lower his demands, and yield to you.

I mention this, not because I deem it possible, but because I know men in your position comfort themselves with false hopes, and this among others, and imagine that God will, out of pity, be less severe with you than some believe. It has been the object of this argument to-day to meet just such errors by causing you to realize that God's government is not a loose congregation of powers, but a compact and immutable *system*; and that it is administered in strict harmony with invariable principles and eternal usage, and not with emotional impulse and the accidental risings of merciful sentiment. And this, not only what I have advanced, but the very nature of things,

proves. For who is so insane as to imagine that God at this late day (if I may so speak) will revoke the decisions made at the birth of man, ignore the past policy of his administration, and slight the imperative requirements of his government? Who is fool enough to argue, that for his sake, woe that he is, the Creator and Preserver of worlds will cease to rule in accordance with those strict principles of rectitude, which he, at the birth of time, decreed as the *unchangeable* laws of the universe? And, moreover, not alone the nature of things and immutable government of God forbid this, but the security of the heavenly world, and the protection of those pure beings who either from this or other globes have entered into the celestial glory, require that none but perfectly sinless beings ever be admitted into their sainted circles. Be assured, friends, that, while the heavens stand, the angels of God will never be disturbed. Into that vast multitude, composed of saint and seraph, no guile can ever enter. On the banks of the river of life none but stainless feet can walk. Though a thousand races like ours should perish, yet the purity of the heavens must be kept from stain, and their marvellous peace eternally preserved.

Nor will a generous nature desire it to be otherwise. Though we lay on our dying-beds, and felt that the first hour after death would be the first of an endless torture, yet would we say, "Let thine angels, O Lord! remain happy, though we be lost, and thy heavens give protection only to the pure, albeit we, and such as we, be exiled forever from their blessed abodes."

If, then, the nature of God's decrees and the safety of the heavenly world alike forbid and make impossible any change in his administrations of things, and if the demands of the divine and holy law cannot be in the least abated, or its execution delayed, surely but one alternative remains: as he can not and will not yield to you, you must either accept his terms, or incur the consequences of refusal. What his demands are, you all, every one of you, are fully aware. They are briefly summed up in the formula of the Scriptures, "Except a man repent and believe, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven;" and again, in those other words of the Saviour when he said, "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

This is the glory of the atonement, that those who were sunk in sin, and irretrievably ruined, should, by its conditions, be treated as sinless in the eye of God.

It is only when you contemplate the crucifixion of Christ, with the inky blackness of God's wrath, merited by every transgressor, forming the background, that you behold the glory of the scene. It is only by considering the race, each and all, as individuals lying hopelessly in condemnation, with generation after generation surging, wave-like, to their doom,—the cradles of the children growing yearly more defiled, and the graves of the aged yearly more hopeless,—that any soul can intelligently be thankful for what God has done for the children of men. But, friends, when one thus stands looking back over

the ruins of a *lost* world, — lost to God and holiness, yea, and even to virtue and decency, — he realizes the emphasis of the angelic song that hailed the advent of a Saviour to this earth. To them it was a proof that Satan should not triumph even in little. Him whom heaven had ejected, earth should eject. His ambition should be thwarted in its highest and lowest aim. Neither the throne nor the footstool of God should be unto him as a reward or possession. As his foot had never touched the one, so should every trace of its imprint be washed from the other.

No: let no one who dwarfs the justice of God say that he can understand his mercy; for never, save as he ponders the inexorable nature of justice, which, though a favorite race lay dying, yet, true to its righteous instincts, stood inflexible, as she of the scales and blinded eyes in ancient story, saying the one unalterable sentence, “Without the shedding of blood there can be to man no remission,” and when, obedient to this cry, — the sublimity of which angels can, if man cannot, appreciate, — he sees the Son of God rise, and, descending from his throne, offer himself in sacrifice for man, does the atonement, in all its majestic proportions, break upon him; and, filled with adoring admiration, he exclaims, “Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!”

But, if the justice of God cannot allow those who are guilty to go unpunished, it cannot, on the other hand, permit the righteous to go unrewarded. The

same immutability which places the one beyond a doubt necessitates the other.

And when we consider that the sins of the Christian have already been punished in his surety Christ, and though without any inherent righteousness himself, yet by a derived righteousness, he is made holy, we behold on what a reliable basis the expectation of the believer rests. In such a one we behold the triumphant vindication of the vicarious sufferings and death of Christ. "If I have fled to the cross for refuge," he may say, "and sincerely pleaded, with faith, forgiveness through his blood, my hold on everlasting life is too strong for any power to loosen." If, through the conviction and impelling power of the Spirit, a man's life has, at last, been placed in harmony with the divine desires, and grown under heavenly influence in holy graces, we can conceive of no combination of evils strong enough to resist its ultimate and harmonious union with God. The death of Christ having blotted out the handwriting of ordinance that was against us, he himself having taken them out of the way and nailed them to his cross when he died, the great wall which formerly separated the race from God being now broken down, razed, utterly demolished, and over its ruins a strait and narrow way having been mapped out in which our feet can tread, such as faithfully follow in it, I make no doubt, will at last enter in through the gate, and share in the delights of angels.

O Justice ! thou art beautiful. Calm and majestic is thy face. No passion ruffles, no anger darkens it

with a frown. Beautiful are thy closed lids, and that nice sense of equity making a law unto thyself, forbidding thee to see either poor or rich, high or low, guilty or guiltless, lest peradventure pity or fear might make thee untrue to thyself, and thou shouldst die killed by thy first wrong act. Beautiful are thy garments of faultless drapery, thy rounded arm extended, and thy hand of snow grasping the balanced scales. No wonder that the ancients worshipped thee; no wonder that they enthroned thee among the number of their gods. The human mind cannot think of Deity, and not think of thee. O Justice! hear thou our prayer in heaven, thy birthplace and the place of thy abode. Descend to-day, and stand before this people. Thou art needed in our market-places; thou art needed in our courts; thou art needed in our capitols; yea, and in our churches also art thou needed. Come clothed with a beauty beyond the symmetry in which the chisel of the Greeks carved thee, beyond the majesty that made the canvas of the masters that bore thy likeness immortal, beyond what we of this careless generation know or dream of fitness, and stand revealed before us. Come not alone, but bring thy sister Mercy; and standing here in this attentive presence, with thy left hand holding Mercy by her right, thy right holding forth the scales, let thy voice, mingling with hers, making sweet music by the union, be heard of every ear, saying, "Here we stand, twin-attributes of God, born, in one birth, of his love, appointed each unto our mission, — the one to protect the innocent,

the other to plead for the guilty among men." Then will this people say of thee, "O God!" — and the sound shall bear the joy of their hearts upon it as the great wave bears up the snowy ornament of its white foam, — "justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne."

SABBATH MORNING, MAY 7, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—THE JUDICIAL ELEMENT IN HUMAN NATURE AND PRACTICE

“AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STAND BEFORE GOD; AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED; AND ANOTHER BOOK WAS OPENED, WHICH IS THE BOOK OF LIFE; AND THE DEAD WERE JUDGED OUT OF THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOKS, ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.” — Rev. xx. 12.

CERTAIN exceptions have been taken by some who heard the discourse of last sabbath morning, in which you remember I spoke of the justice of God as an element of his government and the rule of his conduct, on the ground that it made him appear harsh and unlovely; and if such an attribute in any such forceful activity as I described did exist, still the mass of men would not appreciate the necessity of it, nor understand the service it may serve in the divine economy. These strictures, I judge, were in the main honestly made, and convinced me that I should do well to make in another discourse the application of the principles discussed in the first. This I will, with your permission, proceed to do; and, that you may the better remember what I have to say, I will epitomize it in the form of a topic, — the judicial element in human nature and practice.

I call your attention, then, in the first place, to what I think will appear to all of you, upon inspection, to be true, that society is organized upon a judicial basis. Man, the intelligent agent and observer, judges man. Every artist in this city judges all his fellow-artists. His art gives him a standard, by which he mentally approves or condemns every picture he examines. Man, as an author, judges authors. He reads a book as a jury hears a case, discriminatingly probing and sifting it. So it is with you all. You sit in judgment on every book you read, every picture you see, every orator you hear. You are now sitting in judgment on this sermon and on me. You cannot help it; you would be stupid if you could. So long as it shall be natural for you to think, you will be judges.

I have been greatly interested in the line of thought here suggested. I was surprised to see to what depths and heights this principle applied. I could trace the line of application from the very bottom to the top of human relation. Wherever you find combination, wherever association, there you find the judicial sentiment cropping out. Even in children and childish amusements you discern it. The games of the parlor and play-ground have a judicial relation. Let a boy at marbles overstep a certain line, disobey a certain rule, and listen to the clamor! What an uproar there is! How urgent the protest, how severe the condemnation! Every boy, on the instant that the rule is infringed, becomes a judge, and the culprit is made to feel the weight of deserved judgment. Come up higher. Contemplate a group

of ladies and gentlemen engaged in some social game, whist or chess, or whatever you please. One of the party makes a doubtful move, or plays out of his order. The error is instantly detected. His attention is called to his mistake. He persists. The book of reference is produced, the rule read; and he stands condemned. He set himself consciously or unconsciously against the judicial sentiment, the sentiment of law, of equity, of fair play; and it asserted itself, and its assertion was natural and spontaneous.

I was passing a marble-yard the other day. I leaned against the fence, and watched the workmen. A man near me was hewing away at a block. He was sharpening an angle. At every dozen strokes he would pause, and apply an instrument. And what did that mean, pray? He was bringing his work to judgment, I respond. He knew that by his works he should at last be judged, and he was securing himself against condemnation in that hour. He was a judge, you see, unto himself.

You perceive, friends, that the judicial element is not novel to man. Its application is a matter of individual and daily experience. It is outside the Bible as well as inside of it. It is not a harsh and unlovely sentiment, but a protective and salutary one. Man resorts to it as to a friend. He uses it freely both as regards himself and others. In art, in literature, in social life, society demands and pronounces law and judgment. It may truly be called the habit of man's nature.

Now, friends, I ask, if, in the simple relations and

comparatively insignificant acts of life, men pronounce judgment, have resort to the judicial attribute, why object to the same course in matters complex and important? If the laborer cannot even saw a stick of timber, or hew a block of marble, unless he makes repeated application of the judicial sentiment, how, think you, can he shape his character, control his passions, and govern his conduct, without comparing it daily and hourly with the standard of absolute rectitude? Why, look at your civil structure. What does the magistrate symbolize? What does every act of legislation signify? Are these any thing save the embodiment of this judicial element extant in society? Is not law, in its very essence, a judgment against wrong? Every member of your legislature is a man sitting in judgment. The man who sat, pen in hand, following, with unappreciated patience and skill, the "proof" of this discourse, was a judge: his position, his duty, made him such. And so it is everywhere, in every branch of business, in every association of life. Wherever you look, there you behold law; where law is, whether executed or unexecuted, there you behold judgment.

Why then, friends, do men wonder and cry out because God does the very same thing that they are constantly doing? Why marvel that he should judge the very things that they approve or condemn? Is not intelligence in its nature everywhere the same? Is not the moral sense the same? If man is necessarily a judge because he is endowed with moral perception, must not He in whom this perception exists

in infinite measure be a judge also? Where is the illogical position, then, in a discourse setting forth the *judicial* element in the divine nature and government? If you cannot conduct your business, if you cannot engage in a social game, if boys even in play cannot proceed without acknowledging some standard of equity, who is he in this congregation who can imagine that the Supreme Being, the God and Ruler of all, the Source of all law, the very Spirit of order, can carry on his vast and intricate administration without constant reference to a standard of judgment touching what he sees and hears going on in his presence? Can a father be a father, and not be a judge as well? Does not the parental office and relation imperatively demand the possession, and, when occasion occurs, the exercise, of the judicial element? Can a king be a king with no power to decide, with no faculty to discriminate? Could God be God, and not be a judge? Must not "justice and judgment" eternally be "the habitation of his throne"?

But we have not as yet reached the end to this line of thought. Push the analysis farther, cut in closer to the heart of the subject, and you find richer juices still. I am showing, bear in mind, how truly *natural* is the judicial sentiment to man; how thoroughly wonted he is to it by daily exercise; that it is not a novel but a familiar attribute of intelligence; that it exists not alone in God, not alone in the Bible, not alone in the orthodox scheme of salvation, but also in man as man, as a human being, as a moral agent; and that it not only exists in him, but exists in the state and condition of constant exercise.

I have called your attention, in proof of this, to your statutory and written laws, which could have had no other parentage or cause than this judicial sense in man. But this is not all. Lift your eyes from the written page, and look abroad. Come forth from the court of justice, which, in all its forms and actors, is but an embodiment of that sense of law and judgment which God has implanted in every human breast, and behold a yet more powerful manifestation of this sentiment. Here you stand face to face with the great unwritten law of society, — a law which both advertises and enforces itself, — public opinion. This law has never been codified ; it has never been printed in type ; never been filed for safe keeping in the archives of the state or nation : nevertheless, it is recognized and felt as a judicial force in society. It is the unwritten, common law of humanity, perpetuated by tradition, by memory, by the moral sense of each generation. It holds no court ; and yet its sitting is constant. Its court-room is the parlor, the office, the car, the street, the public assembly, and wherever men or women meet to discuss and converse. It has no official existence ; and yet it is stronger than all your judges, stronger than your police, stronger than your legislature. It employs no officers ; and yet, once on a man's track, it follows him through all the labyrinth of his wanderings, hunting him down with a persistency and vigilance baffled or appeased only with the loss of his identity. It builds no prisons, and has need of none ; for it is able to make the whole world a jail, and every member of the community a detective to restrain

and watch the suspected person. The sentences that your courts pronounce upon criminals vary in duration of time ; but the condemnation that public opinion puts upon a man is for life. Whenever and wherever his face is seen, men point it out invidiously ; whenever his name is mentioned, it is mentioned with execration, or in a whisper, as a sound unfit for utterance. The best that friendship can do is to strive to forget his aberration ; and Love herself can do no more than to cover the face of the erring with her mantle, and bear the pain of recollection in silence.

This, friends, briefly and imperfectly described, is what society calls public opinion ; but which in fact, when analyzed, is seen to be nothing save the unwritten, common law of the soul ; the daily, unnoted exercise of the judicial element in human nature, which makes every man, without any election of his own, a judge.

My friends, this is right. None of you object to this. Society must discriminate between the evil and the good ; the line of moral rectitude must be kept white ; even among thieves, honesty must exist ; a kind of judicial standard must be acknowledged. When moral discrimination shall no longer be made, moral security will no longer exist. What nation can endure without courts or any provision for arbitration ? How can honest trade and legitimate commerce thrive without that protection found alone in judicial application ? How could any virtuous society continue when virtue has no indorsement, and vice no condemnation ? Let it be known among the

thieves of this city that no penalty awaits their thieving; tell that most despicable embodiment of all knavery, the forger, that he can forge drafts with impunity; tell the miser that usury is legitimate, and that he can fill his Heaven-condemned coffers by traffic in the necessities and misfortunes of his neighbors; say to the covetous man, "Reach out your hand and take what you will of your neighbors, no harm shall come to you;" say to the tyrant, "Withhold not your heel from the bruised and bleeding neck of the down-trodden;" say to the slave-master, "Scourge, debauch, kill, as many as you please, Justice is dead;" tell all the hard-hearted, the selfish, the cruel, the lustful, tell revenge, tell tyranny, tell those slanders upon humanity whose bodies are full of brutal and devilish instincts, that no judicial crisis shall ever occur in human history; that there shall never be an hour of reckoning, never any check and judgment, any penalty, to them, for all their doings, be they what they may, — and wickedness of every order and degree would receive the announcement with yells of infernal delight: even hell would be shocked out of its despair, and heave itself in a tumult of joy, saying, "We have triumphed! we have triumphed! Man, at last, is ours; and the earth, which we fancied was to be the Lord's, is to us for a possession, to have and hold, and fill with wickedness forever." Under such an advertisement, all moral distinctions would be reversed; and patriotism, honesty, purity itself, become criminal; yea, Virtue would die, and Hope, finding no spot on which to rest her foot, would return, as the dove to the ark, to the bosom of God.

But send forth, with all the force of a soul inspired with the sublime and holy instincts of justice, — send forth, I say, another and a different proclamation: say to the slave, “My brother, thou shalt yet be free;” to the oppressed say, “Rise in the majesty of that might which insulted manhood knows, and liberty shall be yours;” tell tempted and trampled Purity that her cause shall yet be heard; tell the hypocrite that he shall one day be unmasked, and the leer and cunning of his pallid face be revealed; let the trumpet sound forth a warning to all who do wickedness, that an hour cometh, yea, is even nigh to them, when they must stand before a just tribunal, and be judged for the deeds that they have done, — and the message, riding the gale like a thunder-gust, will make the guilty quake, put a restraint upon the evil, and make the righteous glad with an exceeding joy: Virtue will come forth from her sepulchre, revived, re-animated, no more to know death; and Hope, her pinions rebathed in heavenly sheen, will again fan our atmosphere, her wings bringing light, and her voice charming away the sadness of the world.

If, now, any should say, “If law, if public opinion, if the judicial element, are, as you assert, thus potentially in the world, if the guilty are thus condemned and punished in this life, what need is there of punishment hereafter? If man’s judgment is thus strict, searching, and severe, why should a divine judgment be superadded?”

To this objection in the form of a query many satisfactory answers might be made. I suggest — for my time is limited — only this one; viz.: —

In this objection a vital distinction is overlooked, — that society does and can judge only the *act*, while God does and must judge the *heart*. By its judgments, society seeks chiefly physical protection; but God seeks rather spiritual defence. The one seeks the preservation of that order which its peace and temporal prosperity demand; the other, to preserve the integrity of the universe, and keep inviolate the domain of purity. That part of sin offensive to man is but a tithe of its offensiveness. You can never understand the ugliness of sin until you take into account its offensiveness to God. You punish a man because he offends some rule or ordinance of the city or state; but God arrests him as a disturber of the universe, a transgressor of that government, under which, as a maiden beneath the covering shield of her knightly preserver, the innocent and pure of every realm and order of being rest. There is a demerit in sin which no human law can reach. It is too subtle, too mighty. The enemy lies in coiled concealment, silently exulting at your efforts to unmask him. It needs the touch of an angelic spear to shock him out of his disguise. Men find, that, after they have done all they might to judge and destroy evil, more remains unfinished than they have performed. They have only examined the opening passage of the cavern: the inner recess, the curved extremity, where the monster has his lair, they have never visited. Hence they feel the necessity of a fuller judgment, a more searching investigation, a more sweeping and terrible condemnation. A five-dollar fine and six

days in prison are not enough of punishment for murder. When the Bible reveals, therefore, a day of judgment, it reveals what the human mind of itself perceives to be a necessity. The idea of a judgment after death is no more biblical than it is classical. Every people under heaven who have reached any considerable mental expansion, who have advanced far enough to study at all the problems of moral responsibility, of justice and equity, have had their theory of a judgment. In Persia, in Hindostan, in India, among the Egyptians, in the mythology of the Greeks and Romans, in the teachings of the Druids, and in the picturesque faith of the poor Saxon-hunted Indian, among every race and tribe, the idea of a judgment, a day of supreme and final allotment of the good and the bad, has been prevalent. The Bible assertion of a judgment-day, instead, therefore, of doing violence to human feelings, is in exact harmony with them; it is only the divine and authoritative announcement of what the universal consciousness of the race had instinctively conceived must be a fact: and every person at all intelligent and candid yields the free, unforced assent of his intellect to the statement of the Scriptures, that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The doctrine of divine justice, therefore, as an element of God's government, and the rule of his conduct, is a doctrine not only acceptable to, but demanded by, the conscience of the race. It is the necessary supplement to the moral sense in man; the one

doctrine in which, now in this and now in that form, all tribes and peoples have believed and accepted. Who are these, then, who reject it to-day? What a philosophy must that be which starts out not only with a flat denial of revelation, but an ostentatious ignoring of what the wisdom of all the ancients taught! Is Jupiter no longer to grasp the bolt? Is Zeus to be enervated? Is Justice henceforth to stand with an outstretched arm, noticeable because her nerveless fingers have lost their hold on the impartial scales? Is the best thought of this generation to be spent to invent some moral accommodation for thieves? Has modern philosophy no object of ambition save to dethrone God? Far different was it with that ancient culture, which, groping in darkness, guided only by the dim light of an uninspired moral sense, nevertheless made its conception of Deity a being of power, the refuge of the innocent, the terror of the guilty. When Socrates spoke, the fool was silenced, and the guilty abashed. When Demosthenes arose, tyrants trembled, and demagogues turned pale. When the slave Epictetus opened his lips, the words of his mouth derived their marvellous force from their harmony with the eternal principles of right. To these men Justice was beautiful; and the stroke of her sword, when its edge smote the neck of iniquity, stirred them to applause. Shall we of fuller knowledge and clearer insight, seeing better than these its divine and humane connection, — shall we, I say, divorce the judicial element in God's nature and government from our theology, and rob our philoso-

phy of what alone makes it valuable to man, — the power to warn the wicked, and check them in their iniquitous courses?

And now, friends, let us return to the words of the text: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

I have never written a sermon in description of the judgment-day: I have never felt able to do it. I have been little profited by the efforts of others to describe it. The subject is so vast, so solemn, so awful, that I cannot grasp it. In a dim sort of way, I have imagined it, — the vast multitude filling half of heaven; the throne uplifted in the midst; the unreserved revelation of life made by each when questioned; the opened books, in which man finds every deed and thought of his hands and heart recorded; the word of verdict, from which none appeal; the commotion and separation as some pass to the right, others to the left, of the throne; the onlooking angels poising on steady wings like a great white cloud above the crowded mass, — all this, in a dim sort of way, I repeat, I have imagined; but to put the picture in words I cannot. Something within me cries out, "Let the unseen world alone: your utterance in attempted description would vulgarize its august appearances: human language is too flippant to fitly express its solemnities: attempt not a knowledge that you cannot have until the issue and the

hour reveal it." Vain is it, friends, for man to seem wiser than he is. Vain is the forced solemnity of tone, the studied wildness of gesture, the lashing of imagination dignifying its spasms with the name of religious exhortation. The solemnities of heaven are solemn only to the silent. Reverence is known only to the bowed head, the closed lid, and the lip moving in speechless prayer and praise. When that dark curtain which the ancients dreaded, and which conceals so much, shall be rolled up, and you and I, friends, see what is within the veil, then we may speak, if speak we can, of what to-day God's wisdom hides ; until which time, with the signal of silence on our lips, let us keep the attitude of reverence. I shall attempt no description, therefore, of the judgment : I leave it where the word of God leaves it, — predicted, asserted, but undescribed. One or two reflections will suffice.

1. *The judgment will take place.* You and I, my hearers, will be *judged*. The time will come when we must stand before God ; when all the acts of our lives will be passed in review by him. The hour is to be when we shall feel the eye of the All-seeing fastened upon us ; when every hidden thought and secret imagination and fickle fancy will be uncovered before the gaze of Infinite Purity ; when the plans and purposes of our lives will be weighed, and our professions compared with our performance ; when what we omitted to do of right, as truly as what we committed of evil, will be recounted and noted by the Judge ; when, in short, friends, we shall all be put in the

balances, and weighed. Who is it in this audience to-day who feels able to endure that scrutiny, and bear that divine inspection, confident that he will be found sufficient in that balance? Who here has omitted no duty, committed no wrong, transgressed no law, been tainted by nature or indulgence with no impurity? If any, let him rise, and say to us, "Behold a perfect man!" The perfect man is not here. We have all gone astray; we are all lacking; we are all guilty before God. Even our own consciences condemn us; and, if our imperfect moral sense convict us, how shall the justice of God say, "Ye are all blameless"? It can not, it will not. And I only declare what you all know to be true when I say, "We are condemned already." My friends, what shall we do? When Peter was preaching at the Pentecost, the multitude was so convinced of the justice of God and their guilt, so convicted of their sinfulness before the law, that they knew not which way to turn. The very ground seemed to be heaving beneath their feet; and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" I make the reply of Peter mine, — another or a better I cannot give, for it is the only one that meets your emergency, — "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

2. The value of Christ is never realized save in moments of profound conviction. It is only when the tempest beats upon us, and the waves threaten to engulf us, that we run to awake him. What

renders a philosophy or religion which fails to make divine justice a prominent feature of its teaching so dangerous to true godliness is, that it necessarily underrates the need of a Saviour. Whatever does this is calculated to deceive men, to make them satisfied with what is not satisfactory to God, and discourage efforts to convert men. Why need the surf-boat be kept constantly manned when there is no cloud in the sky, and no wreck in the harbor? All guilt is comparative. We should not know the exceeding lightness of feathers were it not for the heaviness of lead. Sin is a deflection in morals from the line of absolute rectitude. Any thing that tends to wipe out that line, to erase it, or shade it down, so that the wicked shall not see it, is, to the full measure of expression, evil; any theology, any philosophy, any theory of morals, which does not, in all its teachings, insist on the presence and exercise of absolute justice on the part of God in his judgments of human conduct, is but preparing man to ignore caution and despise warning, is but making the road along which the masses of the future shall rush to moral declension both broad and steep. A Godless philosophy is the direst curse that can be inflicted upon a city or nation. Poor bleeding France, her body mangled with a thousand wounds, each wound a mouth, is making her dying protest and bearing her dying testimony to-day against the ignorance of priestly rule on the one hand, and an atheistical culture on the other. Despising the justice of heaven, they have learned to trample upon the justice of the earth.

To-day, friends, we are to celebrate in a memorial service the death of Christ when in his own person he made atonement to the transgressed law. Not alone the love, not alone the mercy, but the justice of God also, as something lovely and above price, we hold in remembrance as we gather to the table of the Lord. I say, the table of the Lord; for so is he known in heaven, and so shall he yet be known universally on earth. Where his cross stood, his throne shall yet stand; and on the spot of his mortification he shall rule in glory and power. I think of his second coming as the day when every wrong shall have its legitimate redress; when the weak whom none now respect shall be defended, and the cause of his people everywhere vindicated. No throne of wickedness shall stand in the day when his is builded, no form of iniquity survive the onslaught of his energies, no sin endure in the presence of his holiness. To these shall he be what the fire is to the dried stubble. They shall melt; they shall consume away.

Come, then, thou blessed of the Father, and inherit the kingdoms! Smite injustice with that hand that injustice pierced. Place, with the majesty of motion all thine own, the crown of empire on thy once wounded head. Around thy side, once riven for us, let the glory of thy celestial vesture be folded. Tell us from what point of the heavens thou wilt come, that we may watch for thee with longing eye as those of old, who, wise in their day and generation, watched for the promised star. O Lord, our Saviour! we

wait for thee. Our hearts in all their longings in the night-time cry out for thee. In the language of that favored one, gifted with vision beyond his state, we say, "Come quickly:" first wash us in thy blood, which cleanseth whiter than fullers' soap, that we may be without spot, and blameless, as those shall be who welcome thee; and we will hail thee to thy throne, — our hearts being that throne, — yea, and to thy just and holy sovereignty over all mankind.

SABBATH MORNING, MAY 14, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT. — DEATH A GAIN.

“TO DIE IS GAIN.” — Phil. i. 21.

PAUL is here speaking from the high standpoint of Christian experience. It is not as a natural, but as a renewed man, that he speaks. The assertion is not the boast of physical courage: no one can make it appear so. It is the exclamation of piety; the holy confidence of one who “knows in whom he has believed,” and whose faith in the blessedness of his future condition is absolute.

Nor was he a mere theorist, amusing himself in safety and seclusion with poetical speculations. It is easy to play with a dreadful event when it is remote. Even a child watches with observant delight the thunder-gust when it first heaves up its convoluted blackness in the west, — a moving contortion of shadow, a tumultuous silence; but what child is there that does not run screaming into the house when the cloud opens, and the hot, withering bolt rives the air, and the very heavens seem to recoil and stagger back at the awful explosion? And so it is with man

touching the matter of death. So long as he is well, and physically strong ; so long as life seems secured to him for years, and death a far-off and undefined event, — he speaks of it calmly, carelessly perhaps, or, it may be, with unseemly wit. It is not difficult, in such circumstances, to philosophize with calm and polished indifference upon death : but when the event is no longer remote, but nigh ; when the cloud has crept upward all unperceived, so busy has he been, and the first he beholds, as he looks up, is the ragged edge of blackness over his head, and the awful gloom growing about him, and he knows and feels that he stands a target, against which an unseen and deadly bolt is being directed, which he cannot with his best efforts but for a moment or two avoid, — then it is that the man's indifference departs ; then it is, when he stands with his feet on the very margin of the unknown, that he blanches ; then he contemplates with awe or terror the approach of the catastrophe, which never, until then, had to his eyes the character of a fact.

Now, when the apostle wrote the sentence, “For to me to die is gain,” he felt that he was nigh the experience of which he spoke. Death could not appear to him as a remote event, but one that might come to him at any hour. He was in prison, and amid all the uncertainties of such a position. The executioner might enter his cell at any moment. He felt that the hour of his martyrdom was drawing nigh. He was writing, as it were, his farewell love-letter to the church, which, of the many he founded, he seems

to have loved the best. He had led a checkered life, and it was drawing to a close. The future, which to those about him was as a gate opening into blackness, rose directly in front of him. It was under such circumstances, that, sitting in his lonely cell, he calmly wrote to his dear children in Christ at Philippi, "To me to die is gain." It was not a boast; it was not even exultation: it was only a statement, but a statement in which all the forces of his faith, all the fulness of his hope, all the longing of his soul, were centred. It was as the sky when it spreads out in calm, motionless, unruffled blue; no shade of jasper, no tinge of azure, in it; but here and there a deep-seated star shines out, and the gazer feels that at any moment the blue may break into orange, and the curtain be changed to the color of the outstreaming glory behind it.

I wish, friends, to-day, to examine this statement in your presence. Let us reflect upon it together. Let us see why and how it is that dying is gain to a Christian.

Allow me to say, to start with, that I do not preach this sermon in the way of consolation to any. It was not suggested by any occurrence of bereavement in the parish. It is not a "funeral" sermon. It is not seized upon as a happy topic to "impress" any one. Nor do I expect it to be a specially "solemn" discourse, in contradistinction to any delivered on other themes. It is, as I conceive of it, a discourse of doctrine, of instruction, of explanation and analysis, not of exhortation. The whitest line that Christ

drew across the black surface of his time was that which he drew in his teaching and demonstration concerning death. He it was that "led captivity captive;" and men saw with amazement the king of terrors, spoiled of his arms, and fettered, walking in the train of his triumph. Previous to Christ, the grave was a mystery. Like a damp, subterranean dungeon, it dripped with horrors. Men went to the mouth of it, peered tremblingly in, saw its darkness, felt its issuing chill upon their faces, shook at the awful suggestions of its silence, and fled. Of all the millions that had gone down into it, not one had ever returned. It was the silent shore of a hidden sea. Ship after ship sailed out into the darkness; but how and whither the watchers knew not, for never had an inrolling wave brought back even so much as a tell-tale fragment. Where did all these millions go? What fortunes fell to them? Was there another life? was there another and a brighter shore, not songless, beyond the gloomy line? or did they all sail into great abysses, and were swallowed up forever? With such questions men were baffled; and ignorance, as is always the case, begat superstitions. Crude and horrible fancies filled the world. These passed into literature; and the wildest fantasies became, in time, standards of conception. Art shared in the delusion. Death was pictured as a goblin shape brandishing a dreadful spear, and the tomb became synonymous with dread. It was a chasm too wide for men to jump. Here and there, poetry cast a silken strand across it; stoicism bridged it with indifference; and the old astrologers

passed over on a pathway of stars : but to the mass it was an abyss ; and the generations in a steady stream poured over into it as into some Niagara of fate, and were lost in ghastly spray.

But, when Christ came, all this was changed. You remember what an incredible saying it was to the disciples, that he “should be buried, and on the third day rise again.” They could not understand it. When he shouted to the dead Lazarus to “arise and come forth,” he did more than make a demonstration of his miraculous power : he gave a shock to that entire system of superstition touching death which dominated over the ancient world. The revelation in the case of Lazarus was partial ; but a full and perfect one remained to be made, even in his own person. In the fulness of time, he died ; he descended to the grave ; he crept along the crumbling edges of mortality ; he explored all the recesses of what had been a world-long mystery ; he illumined the grave with a light that might never fade, banishing forever its darkness : then he came forth, and men saw him *unharméd* ! What must have been the feelings of the disciples ? I have never marvelled at the scepticism of Thomas. As I read the narrative, he always appears to me to have been an unimaginative, cool-headed, matter-of-fact man. He had seen Jesus nailed to the cross ; he had seen his bosom transfixed with a spear, — a rough, huge-headed Roman spear ; he had heard his death-cry, and watched him as he gave up the ghost. He *knew* that he had died and been buried ; and was he to believe those, who, with panting and

excitement, told him that Jesus was actually alive again? It was impossible; a flat contradiction of the law of Nature and all human experience. Was Death, that dread power the whole world feared; whose shadowy sceptre ruled over all kingdoms; whose lightest whisper the mightiest obeyed; at whose touch love shrivelled in the arms of love, and was dropped from its embrace with a shriek, — was this awful event no more than a mantle which a man assumes and lays off at pleasure? Was a sepulchre of hewn rock, with its stone-guarded door, only a bower, in which this man might sleep for a night or two, and then come forth refreshed? Well might he say, — and I thank God that he did say, — “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into his side, *I will not believe.*” But at last he *had* to believe, for the very proof that he so cautiously and determinedly insisted on was given him; and convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt, overpowered at the stupendous manifestation that the world had received, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”

It is to Christ, then, that we are indebted for emancipation from an intolerable fear. It was necessary that he should taste of death, that the bitterness of its waters might be sweetened by the touch of his lips. As a father wades out into a stream to encourage his timid child to cross, so Christ went down into the river men had dreaded, but whose waters are full of cleansing, and whose farther waves beat on a golden shore. I regret to say that Christians are slow to improve the

privilege of knowledge and faith. The old heathen superstition still endures. To many a professor, even, Death is a monster, and not the dark-faced but kind-hearted usher that he is, sent out to lead us to our Father's palace. I know of little truly Christian poetry. Many of our otherwise sweetest hymns are harsh with the old heathenish moan. Literature is more mythological in its presentation of death than scriptural. Art is perverted by the same error. When shall we have an artist that will paint us an angel, and not a spectre? We dress our grief as the ancients who lived before life and immortality were brought to light dressed theirs. The color of our mourning gives the lie to our faith. A saint is lifted to her glory and her reward in heaven, and we put on black! The Shepherd in his deep love stoops, and takes a little feeble lamb to his bosom; and we knot crape to our door, and fill the house with lamentation! How might the birds teach us, that sing their little ones into the air when grown beyond the accommodations of the nest! They have instinctive faith in God. They know that his heavens are broad and high, and that their darlings will not lack room, nor one of them fall to the ground without his notice: but we shudder when ours fly off, and sit and mourn over the deserted cradle; forgetting the sublime statement of Paul, that "to die is gain."

"How a gain?" you say. "Make it appear to me that I shall gain in dying. Cause it to stand out before my eyes."

In the first place, then, I remark, that to die is a gain, considered physically.

I would detract nothing, friends, from the glory of the body. As the servant of the mind, as the companion and temple of the soul, in its powers of adaptation, in the variety of its senses, as a medium through which unnumbered pleasures come to us, it is truly admirable. When in health, it is a marvel of accommodation. Through it we are able to appropriate whatever is delightful to the eye, harmonious to the ear, and agreeable to the taste. It ministers to wants beyond its own, lends a charm to companionship, and connects us in closest bonds of sympathy with the world of Nature.

Regarded in one light, the Christian can but regret that he must depart from the mortal tenement in which for years he has lived and labored. Even the aged, thinking upon it as a life-long companion, and which, though often abused, was ever the object of unceasing care and solicitude, contemplate often with unfeigned sadness the gradual decline of its powers and the prospect of extinction. Then too, as a specimen of divine ingenuity, it is so marvellous, as a medium of communication with the material world it is so facile, as a help to interpret the feelings between soul and soul it is so quick and sensitive, so full of mobility, and perfectly adapted to human necessities, that it is natural and proper to mourn the extinction of its powers and the lapse of its energies. It is fit that we mourn when beauty fades. I have lain in the night-watches on the silent shore when the waves slept and the golden sands were unstirred, and seen a starsway for a moment uneasily in its orbit, then fall ;

and mourned that the heavens had lost so bright a beam. I have seen a rose that had blossomed on my table, that had made the air of my study sweet, and cheered my toil, become loosened in its formation, until its leaves fluttered downward in death; and my thoughts fell with them; and the quick fancies that had flowered while they flowered lay amid the dead leaves, dead as they. I have stood above the dying deer, monarch of the woods, child of the wind and the sunshine, swift as the one, bright as the other: I have seen the film gather over the eye pure as the sky on which it loved to gaze, and knelt reverently to press the fringed lid to its lasting rest, and pondered, in the deep silence of undisturbed Nature, whither its wild life had fled,—nevermore would it crop the flowers upon the meadow-land; nevermore would its trumpet sound from the pine-crested ridge; nevermore would the waters of its native lake cool its heated sides, heated in nimble play,—and, pondering, relieved my sadness with the thought, that I had never consciously taken life of its kind in vain. And when I think of that vast multitude of men and women that die daily, of all the forms that languish on beds of suffering, of all the power and beauty passing from the world with the passing of every hour, my heart is heavy, and I say, “Oh that man might not die! oh that woman might not perish! oh that all the power and loveliness they embody might abide and fail not, but increase and multiply both by addition and expansion until the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord, even his perfected likeness!”

But, when reason triumphs over sentiment, the scales are reversed, and I see how uncalled for is regret. The body is no longer worthy, no longer beautiful: I no longer desire it. As a student, I see how it hinders my growth, both by the interruption of its necessities and its diversions. I see that it cramps and clogs the intellect through all the grades of perceivable influence,—from the slightest, clean down to idiocy. It limits man's acquisition of knowledge, compelling it to be both local and partial; and allows him no security against the total loss of all that by years of patient toil he has obtained. In one night of fever, or by the shock of some slight accident, Reason is hurled from her throne, the casket of memory overturned, and the jewels emptied into the depths of the sea. It is, moreover, the parent and birthplace of disease. In it are born those causes and results that make life miserable, which burden friendship, and task the service of love, filling the day with regrets and the night with pain, until life itself becomes oppressive, and existence an experience incompatible with happiness. But these reflections do not fully express the sinister influence of the body on us. There is another and a heavier charge in the impeachment; for it is the avenue of temptation to the soul. In it inordinate desires lurk; passions dwell in it; appetites, whose indulgence is ruin, find in it a natural and impregnable fortress; lust and unholy cravings nest in it, and bring forth their horrible offspring daily. A vast family of wants inhabit it, to feed which we must often tax ourselves heavily.

We resist, and suffer for it ; we yield, and are destroyed. In brief, the soul of man seems to me like a king compelled to live continually in the camp of his enemies. On all sides is danger : if he resists, they assault him, they cover him with wounds, they beat him down, strip him of his royal vestments, and disgrace him ; if he yields, he loses the identity of his integrity, which alone is asserted in antagonism. Who, as he has reflected upon these matters, has never longed for another and a nobler companion ? Who may not with reason and reverence exclaim, “ Oh for a body no more subject to disease, no more tormented with pain, no more dominated by death !—a body not cramped and local, but liberal and universal in the action of its functions ; moving with the ease of light along the lines of varied acquisition, telescopic in its powers, harmonious in all its elements, whose very appetites are refined, whose passions are legitimate, and whose desires are holy, — a body which shall not hinder, but assist, the intellect ; which will not dwarf, but enlarge, the soul, by supplying it with more and better methods of manifestations, — a body untainted by disease, unsusceptible of pain, incapable of exhaustion, and superior to death ” ?

To this aspiration, friends, I reply, To such a body shall the dying Christian come. Death, with kindly hand, will lead him into the vestibule of this magnificent mode of life. He shall stand beneath its upheaved arch, whose only ornament is the majesty of its magnitude, — none other being needed ; and as his eye traverses its suspended dome, grown by the

atmosphere of the place into God-likeness, he shall say, "This, then, is the temple not built with hands. *I fill it!*" In the world beyond the grave, the populations are so vast that they are never computed: their census exists only in God's mind. And the language they use is, in its symbols, numberless as the objects of their universal inquisition. But in all the vast vocabulary of their speech, in all the infinite pantomime of their expression, there is no symbol nor sign for pain. That sensation, to the believer in Christ, ends at death. Indeed, all the children of Sin die with their mother. The spiritual body, begotten and bestowed of God, will be full of the powers and characteristics of God. When that physical life, which, to some of God's elect on earth, is but one prolonged spasm of pain, is happily over, and the transparent hands fold themselves, and the lids droop, suffering and inconvenience will be ended. We shall all be content when we awake in His likeness.

Come, then, thou beautiful night, that revealest to man the star of so bright a hope! we tire of the heat and of the day. If thou obscurest the things of earth, — things which had delighted us, and that we loved, — thou nevertheless makest the grand dome of future life, with all its solemn spaces and starry passages, to appear unto our eyes. Let, then, thy dark shadows fall upon those chambers where lie the suffering and the sick, and those whose cheeks are continually wet with tears, that, with thy darkness, sleep may come to them, weary of pain, — even that sleep which God giveth to his beloved. Come to the

bed of tossing, and couches of distress ; come to those that fear thee ; remove thy mask, and let them see how calm and gentle is thy face ; come to those that long have prayed for thee as men in dungeons pray wildly and madly for freedom, and deliver them out of bondage ; come as a sweet surprise to those that shrink from thee as children from the physician who has come to heal them ; come to the elect of God in his good time and pleasure, — and we will hail thee as the last and kindest ministration of his love, and take thy hand as a loyal subject might take the hand of a herald who had come forth to lead him to his king.

But, if it is gain for the Christian to die when physically considered, much more does it appear to be true in relation to the mind. This is the glory of man. There is no power like that of the intellect. Thought, unless it be sadly perverted, is a divine exercise of a divine force. He who thinks purely feels like God. There is no pleasure like that of intelligence. All men in the creative conception, and also in point of fact, are students. As soon as he is born, the child becomes a linguist. He studies and acquires intuitively. The mind searches for knowledge as the mouth of the babe for the mother's breast, and is not content until it is filled. Its wants grow with its growth, and the supply of its necessities is to it the source of its happiness. The body is "of the earth, earthy : " of dust is it made, and unto dust will it return. The loveliest flower loses in time its formation and its tinting, and is resolved back into

its original elements. Its beauty, like its life, is an accident. But the mind is not of earth, but of spirit, and can never lose its coherence. Existing as an essence, it is lifted above the laws of matter, and is superior to its fate. I forget the body as I speak. The invisible in me addresses the invisible in you. Not the eye, but that which brightens the eye, not the voice, but that which sounds through the voice, not the body, but that which animates it, distinguishing it from its kindred clay, is what I allude to when I speak of mind. The history of the race is but a narrative of man's search for knowledge. He has probed the earth; he has pursued the stars; he has tortured the air for food to appease the hunger of his mind. He could not and he would not eat unless he fed from the viands of the gods. This hunger is to eternally endure. We share the craving with the angels. Like birds of different degrees of growth, but of the same species, we search the air for the same food, and are continually crossing each other's lines of flight. I fly to-day where they flew yesterday, and the pinions of my mind will beat to-morrow the air which their vans fan to-day. The things that they desire to look into my eyes ache to see, and the song in praise of apprehended excellence they sing will roll in crested waves of melody from my lips when my eyes behold it.

But what a hinderance and impediment this life, in its necessities and conditions, is! How it weighs me down as a stone fastened to a bird's wing would oppress its flight! I cannot rise; I cannot soar into

the clear spaces of the pure realm above me. I am held back and restrained amid damp and vapor. I cannot attain. I can only prove my aspiration, only demonstrate the divine instinct in me, by flutterings. What a god in knowledge, what an angel in apprehension, what a giant in power, man might become, but for the body! Where is the world he might not reach? What star is there in all the heavens he might not visit? Along the shining trail of what blazing comet might he not fly? What companionships would not such a flight bring him! How would his soul grow into the angelic mood, and adoration become the normal expression of his nature, as he saw and gazed and acquired! For, wherever he flew, on the marge of whatever world he landed, there would he behold God, whom to see is to adore. Everywhere, I repeat, in his finest expression, would he see Jehovah, even as voyagers in tropical seas find Nature in her finest expression in the bloom and fragrance of flowers, land they on whatever isle they may.

To all these possibilities — and, besides these, what are the possibilities of the earth? — death will introduce the Christian. As the opening of the door means freedom to the caged bird, so dying means freedom to the mind. No more will the body wire it about; no more will it pine and droop, fed by a hand that knows not its natural food; no more will the plumage of its breast, rent in its fruitless struggles for liberty, crimson the floor; but it shall fly forth with a great burst of song, condensing in one note all it feels of

hate for bondage, and of love for its henceforth assured freedom. It shall fly forth, I say, the boundless dome of heaven alone marking the limit of its flight; it shall feed on food eaten of all its kind, and the plumage of its breast, as it goes forever soaring upward, reflect the glory of its Maker and its God.

“To die is gain.” It is a universal statement universally disbelieved. I have searched the graves of twenty grave-yards, and not a marble slab or shaft, plainly wrought or chiselled in costly design, bore this immortal assertion. I have prayed above a hundred coffins, and watched the faces of the mourners anxiously: not one betrayed a knowledge of this sentence. I have carried a bright face to the funeral-chamber, and spoken the words of cheerful faith; and men have marvelled, revealing their scepticism by their surprise. I have found it hard to persuade men that death is sunrise: but when I compare the conditions of this life with those of the next; when I set the body sensual over against the body spiritual, the mind in bondage over against the mind emancipated; when I have bowed myself over the white face, beautiful as it lay in deep, unruffled peace, and remembered how passionate and painful was the life; when I have stood beside the dying, heard their murmured words of wonder, their exclamations of rapture, and seen a light not of this world fall upon their faces as they touched the margin of the great change, — I have said to myself, as I turned away, “Yes, Death, thou art a gain, and Paul did not lie.”

My friends, I shall speak again upon this theme.

Its waves of solemn thought roll in upon me as the great billows come rolling landward from the outer sea. Roll on and over me, ye waves of holy thought, white-crested with hope ; beat in upon my soul as the grand wave beats down upon the sounding shore ; and, in thy solemn thunders, tell us of God. O Fear ! I hate thee : thou art the child of Ignorance, and the curse of thy mother's likeness is on thy forehead. Never shalt thou sit as a guest at my table, or darken the entrance of my chamber-door when I or mine lie dying.

There is a bird that mariners call the "frigate-bird," of strange habits, and of stranger power. Men see him in all climes ; but never yet has human eye seen him near the earth. With wings of mighty stretch, high borne, he sails along. Men of the far north see him at midnight moving on amid auroral fires, sailing along with set wings amid those awful flames, taking the color of the waves of light which swell and heave around him. Men in the tropics see him at hottest noon, his plumage all incarnadined by the fierce rays that smite innocuous upon him. Amid their ardent fervor he bears along, majestic, tireless. Never was he known to stoop from his lofty line of flight, never to swerve. To many he is a myth ; to all a mystery. Where is his perch ? Where does he rest ? Where was he brooded ? None know. They only know that above cloud, above the reach of tempest, above the tumult of transverse currents, this bird of heaven, so let us call him, on self-supporting vans that disdain to beat the air on which they rest, moves grandly on. So shall my hope be. At either

pole of life, above the clouds of sorrow, superior to the tempests that beat upon me, on lofty and tireless wing, scorning the earth, it shall move along. Never shall it stoop, never swerve from its sublime line of flight. Men shall see it in the morning of my life; they shall see it in its hot noonday; and when the shadows fall, my sun having set, using your style of speech, but, using mine, when the shadows disappear, my sun having risen, the last they see of me shall be this hope of gain in dying, as it sails out on steady wing, and disappears amid the everlasting light.

I feel, friends, that no exhortation of mine will lift you to this pedestal of hewn granite on which it is given to monumental piety to stand. Only by analysis, by meditation, by thought that ponders in the night-time the majestic utterances of Scripture, and by the open lattice, or, better yet, beneath the grand dome bows in prayer, and holds communion with the possibilities that stand beyond this life, like unfilled thrones waiting for occupants, — only in this way, and in others suggested by the Spirit to minds fit to receive them, will you or any ever rise to the level of the emotion which dictated the text. Where is Paul to-day? Where does he stand, who, from his prison at Rome, sent out this immortal saying? Is there one of us that doubts that he has verified the statement, that “to die is gain”? Not one. We know he walks in glory. He moves amid the majestic spaces where even Deity is not cramped. After all his struggles, he has entered into rest. Yet what has he received that is not in reserve for us? What has

he that has not come to him in the way of gift? And is not his God mine and yours? Will the eternal Father feed with a partial hand? Will he discriminate, and become a respecter of persons, even at his own table? Piety can never receive into its mind the awful suspicion. Our Father feeds his children alike; and the garments that they wear are cut from a royal fabric, — even his righteousness. They shine like suns brought by the action of a sublime movement into conjunction. Rise, then, my friends, ye people of his love, — rise, and climb with me the mighty stairway whose steps are changed from granite to porphyry, and from porphyry to jasper, as we ascend, until our feet, pure as itself, stand on the sea of crystal which stretches in seamless purity before the throne. And you, ye aged, whose faces are already touched with the light of the eternal world, prepare yourselves to enter with gladness through that gate of former blackness, but which Christ revealed to be of pearl, into that city of infinite spaces and majestic proportions, whose maker and builder is God. Say, as you draw nigh to it, as you catch the far-off gleam of jasper, as you hear the outer ripples of its music, as you see breaking on your dying eyes the spectacle of the white-robed waiting by the gate to welcome you, — say, “I have journeyed far; I have journeyed long: but here, in this chamber, on this bed, to-night, my exile and my wanderings cease. No more a pilgrim, no more a stranger, at last I see, at last I enter into, my everlasting home.”

SABBATH MORNING, MAY 21, 1871. .

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

“THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, AND DESPERATELY WICKED: WHO CAN KNOW IT?”—Jer. xvii. 9.

THE heart is spoken of in our text as being the seat of the moral affections; the source of moral or immoral character and tendency. The term is used in its generic sense, and is nearly if not quite synonymous with nature. This, indeed, is the more frequent significance given to it in the Scriptures. All through the Bible, you find it employed to denote the whole nature of man. As a noun of multitude covers all the individuals which come within the reach of its application, so this term “heart” includes each single element or principle in human nature which has a moral bias or character.

When, therefore, it is asserted in Scripture that the *heart* is deceitful and wicked, it is the same as if it were affirmed that the *nature* of man, *human* nature taken as a whole, in all its moral relations and aptitudes, partakes of these evil qualities. The charge is not brought against any individual exponent of that nature, but against the nature itself. It does not

assert that human nature in the life of the thief or highwayman or murderer is deceitful and wicked; but it charges that human nature, wherever found and however expressed, in its hereditary and root elements and principles, is wicked, and intensely wicked at that.

Now, I do not propose to-day to attempt by direct proof to establish this assertion. If any of you in this audience do not believe it, my immediate suggestion to you is, that you look within your own heart, and see what sort of condition, morally considered, it is in. You need not read books, or go abroad in search of facts, to ascertain your wickedness. As the eye takes in colors, so the conscience recognizes the presence of guilt. You see it in yourself, and by observation you discover it in others. A chemist takes a drop of water from the ocean, and, by his analysis of it, ascertains the composition of the whole mass. So man, as one drop in the vast ocean of moral consciousness, by examination of his own heart learns what is the moral condition of all. There is too much of studying sin from the outside. There is too much preaching which takes up moral obliquity as an intellectual proposition, which stands or falls on the strength of verbal demonstration. Is the evidence of sin found alone in the Scriptures? Why fabricate an argument out of proof-texts? The proof of man's guilt is man's acts, and not what any book says about him. The book to read is the book of your life, with the days you have lived for the leaves, and where every leaf is marred by more than one blot. If a

man says that he is not sinful, must I run to Scripture to prove it? No. When a man with the smell of whiskey strong in his breath tells me that he does not drink, must I run to the State House and turn to the statute of prohibition to prove it? Why, no. He is himself the all-sufficient witness against himself. Out of him, with the very utterance of the assertion, came the proof of its falsity. So it is with this matter of personal moral obliquity, this lack of individual holiness, this lapsed and fallen condition of human nature. Books do not prove it; verbal demonstrations do not prove it: it proves itself. As a turbid stretch of water denotes impurity above, so man's words and thoughts and acts show that the source, his heart, is not morally right.

Now, in this discourse I do not, as I said, wish to enter into any argument to establish the text. It is a hard, rough, and thorn-like passage. It rises out of the preceding context, very like as some islands rise out of the placid surface of our Northern lakes, vexing the easy-going waters with their projections of ragged granite, and offering to the eye of the hunter who would beat them for game the harsh opposition of thickets. No, we will not push in and tear our way through this thorny text: we will only paddle around it, as it were, study its rough suggestiveness, in search of some safe and profitable application.

The charge of deceitfulness is brought in our text against the human heart. It is a grave charge. To deceive any one is to lead him astray; to cause him to doubt what is true, and believe what is false; to

delude and entrap him to his lasting hurt. Now, this is a very sweeping allegation. I will show you how grave it is by an illustration.

To an artist, that is a fearful disturbance in vision which transposes colors, causing white to appear black, and black white. What correct and remunerative picture may he ever paint again? How shall he ever again mingle his colors, and from his nicely-prepared mixtures make the canvas to glow with the roseate hues of morning or the star-lighted splendors of the night? Out of what future possibility shall he fashion his wreath? By what application can he win even his physical support? He cannot. That optical delusion, that deceitfulness of vision, has dashed, in one single hour, hope, wealth, and honor to the ground. But what is the eye, either in its uses or dignity, beside the soul? What is that disturbance which affects the fleshly and the temporal compared with that which deludes the spiritual and the eternal? Let blindness fall upon us, and the gates of sight be closed forever to the scenes of earth and time: only leave with us unhampered faith in God, undiminished affection for him, undying hope in the hereafter, and we will live and rejoice in that hope until the healing finger shall touch our sightless orbs, and on our opening eyes shall break the glories of the heavenly world.

But if the heart be diseased; if that invaluable element which enables us to decide as to what is right and wrong be affected; if our affections conspire to lead us astray; above all, if this deceitfulness

and evil bias affect not only this but our future life, — then language is too weak to describe the calamity it inflicts on all; then are we like men exposed to an unmeasured and immeasurable evil.

Now, one of the proofs of the existence of this principle in the heart is, that it leads one to put a false estimate upon himself.

It was in this form that sin found its first expression in Satan. An unseemly pride possessed him. He was ambitious to be equal with God. An inordinate desire to match the Infinite stirred him into that wild and unprecedented rebellion. Sin is always bold with a boldness born of an exaggerated idea of its own prowess. Hence its audacity. Hence its swagger. Hence sinfulness and pride in the Scripture are analogous terms; as in Prov. xvi. 5, “The proud in heart are an abomination to the Lord.” What sin most hates is true humility, — the reverent confession of weakness before God. Its whole aim is to push men to the other extreme; to blind their eyes to their own emptiness, and make them feel that they need nothing. Now, you may go up and down and around the whole earth, and you cannot find a wicked man who is a humble man. Sin has a certain complacency peculiar to itself. It contemplates with a sense of unctuous satisfaction its well-filled granaries, its stocks and bonds, and, smoothing the velvet of its raiment, exclaims, “Soul, take thy ease!” Yea, more: you may canvass all the cities of the world, and all grades of vice, and you will find that sin has a style of contentment in it. Men and women are by it drugged

into a kind of insensibility touching the future. They have no projection to their thoughts. The grave is to them a movable point, ever receding as they advance; and at fifty they are no nearer to it than at thirty. Death is made, by the deceitfulness of sin, to appear as a far-off and remote event; and never until the shadows of the valley which at last envelop all are actually settling around them do they realize that they, too, must die.

My hearer, is this to any extent true of you? Does the grave appear to you as too far off to require immediate attention? Are you counting as sure that which is most uncertain,—life? Are you delaying what should first of all be attended to? If so, I submit that you are not wise. This word of caution is for you. It is God's warning to your soul. Give it due heed, lest you do worse.

Now, the text charges that the heart is not only deceitful, but desperately wicked. This is the culmination of the charge. Let us look at it a moment.

In old Saxon, "wicked" signified "bewitched, possessed with the very spirit of evil." It is one of those words which carry us back to the days of our forefathers, when superstitions abounded, and the belief prevailed that the powers of evil, and Satan himself, entered into men and women, and possessed them. And I am not sure that they were far out of the way. I have been at times rather superstitious myself in view of exhibitions I have seen some people make of themselves! Now, this idea that a wicked man is a

bewitched man, a man of whose heart Satan has taken possession, whose tongue he directs, whose bitterness he prompts, assists the mind in its conception of the origin and nature of evil. It puts one on the right track, and, by a short, sharp race, runs the game to earth.

In modern language, "wicked" means "contrary to the moral law." A man who steals or swears or covets is a wicked man. A man who is addicted to vice of any sort; whose heart is alienated from rectitude and God; whose idea of duty is born, not of the quick sense of right, but of what is politic and expedient,—such a man is wicked: and if he is far gone in these directions, if his moral obliquity has become a habit, then is he a *desperately* wicked man; that is, wicked beyond hope, and to the very verge of despair.

This charge is susceptible of proof. The history of the world proves it. What is that history? You all know. You are intelligent; you are well-read; and you know that the past has been a past of blood. From the time of Cain, brother has smitten brother, and sin and death dominated over mankind. There have been centuries whose history might be expressed by a groan. The life of many generations might be represented with a shackle for its symbol. The shriek of pain, the murmur of the oppressed, the cry of baffled vengeance, and the unanswered prayer, epitomize volumes of labored narrative. The race has marched to its enlarged liberty and its higher life as men march across a battle-field, the blaze of batteries in

their face, and the turf beneath their feet moist with precious blood.

There is an effort being made in this country to confuse and bewilder the public mind on some of the rudimental, underlying questions of men's spiritual condition. The languages of the world are ransacked in order to find some word, some phrase, some definition, to soften, tone down, and emasculate the scriptural idea of sin. They hate the term. And well such teachers may; for if there is such a thing as *sin* in the Bible sense, a positive, voluntary transgression against right principle and salutary law, then all their splendid superstructure of philosophy falls to the ground. This they know and feel. Hence their efforts, hence their anxiety, to explain away and weaken men's convictions on just this point. They call it a "disease," a "misadjustment of the faculties," an "unfortunate but irresponsible tendency." Any term, any phrase, is welcome, so that it banish from their vocabulary of utterance the terrible word, which, if spoken, has a concussive power in it sufficient to demolish all their elaborate structure of deceit. But, friends, there stands the word; there is the ugly fact; the ghostly visitation which mars their feast with its unbidden, unwished-for entrance. What an uphill work it must be for a man to argue before an audience that there is no such thing as sin, when every man and woman before the speaker knows and feels that he has sinned, not once, nor twice, but many times! How can I tell you that you have never sinned, when your own consciences upbraid you? How can I

tell you that you are spotless, when nought but the covering of your secrecy prevents your moral discoloration from standing out palpably to sight? Can I forget that you have memories? Can I go down, and, standing over against your jails, declare that there is no transgression of law, no voluntary and premeditated crime? Why, that philosophy is inconsistent with your civil structure. It flies in the face of every legal enactment on your statute-book. It makes your judges and your officers at court but so many masked players in a play, who act with feigned gravity the parts these theological comedians have allotted them. What a huge farce it is to cry a man because he is afflicted with disease! what broad fun in the assertion, that we shut a man up in Boston, in a prison-cell, if he has "misadjusted faculties"! what grim humor in the statement, that a man was swung off from the gallows and choked to death because he was afflicted with an "hereditary tendency"! Did Theodore Parker hold that the slave-trade was carried on by innocent imbeciles, by people suffering under a disease which deprived them of all blameworthiness in the matter? No: he called them "monsters of wickedness," "intelligent men-stealers," "criminals before God and man." He smote them with words hot as fire, with invective which burnt its way into whatever it touched, invective which was wicked and cruel in itself unless it was deserved. He was orthodox enough when he talked about slavery. When he heard the bay of the blood-hound; saw the panting slave-woman, with her babe in her arms, dragged

down by the savage brute ; when he heard the thud of the lash, knotted with junks of lead, on her bare, palpitating back, and looked into the face of the master standing by, smoking his cigar, quietly enjoying the spectacle of torture, — the screams, the groans, the blood, of the woman, — he forgot his theology, his poetic theories ; and, with flaming cheek and flashing eye, he held him up before the intelligence and virtue of the old Bay State as the “embodiment of *devilishness*, and an outrage upon humanity.”

My friends, this was the conviction of the man, when, with unprejudiced eyes, he saw the action of wicked men and their character. He knew, and we all know, that men are not so diseased that they are not responsible for their acts. There is no such misadjustment of our faculties as to render us unaccountable. We are not imbecile ; we are not lunatic. Our wills are not weakened to idiocy ; our minds are not so blinded as not to see. We are all capable. We have a will to decide, a reason to consider, a moral sense to instruct. We are creatures of premeditation and device. We think and plan, we accept and reject. Every mark of ability is seen in our conduct. And beyond all else is our consciousness, which testifies both to our power and our guilt. More than once in our lives have we done wrong, — done it in spite of knowledge and the outspoken rebukes of our conscience. We did the act, knowing, feeling, that it was wrong ; and the knowledge and feeling remain to this day.

You see the importance of this position ; for, if

true, it changes entirely our position before God from what it is if it is not true. If we have voluntarily transgressed the laws of right, if we have knowingly acted against God's wish and will, then is the wickedness of the heart neither accidental in its character, nor slight in degree. Its depravity is seen to be native, and its guilt positive and intense; and our consciences, when they condemn us, only anticipate the decision of God.

My friends, this is precisely the fact of the case. Our consciences do only anticipate God's judgment; and the Bible, as vindicated by our own consciousness, is true when it says, "We are all under the law. We have all gone astray. There is none that doeth good; no, not one."

But, friends, if you would know and tremble at the wickedness of the heart, look within. No measuring of the surface can sound the ocean. Down, straight down, into the unlighted depths, must the plummet go. Fathom after fathom must it descend or ever it can touch the bottom of the deep, and gauge the distance downward. So is it with the human heart: each man must cast the lead of investigation for himself, and note the depth of his depravity. A man who stands on the bank along the verge of rapids can never realize the swiftness of the current: he must shove off into it, feel the dip of the boat downward, feel the pressure of the air on either cheek as his face cleaves through it, hear the hiss and rasp of the waters under him, seize the oars and measure his strength against it, and by his best efforts barely

hold his own, perhaps not even that, before he can ever conceive, much less estimate, the rush and sweep and power of rapids. So it is with our estimate of sin. The man who merely sees it as exhibited in others, the man who reads of it in his morning paper, who studies it as manifested in society at large, knows nothing of it. If he would know of its violence, of its cruel persistence, of its down-sweeping and destructive vehemence, let him look, not at others, but at himself; let him recall his own experiences and struggles.

Every life has its crisis, every soul its Gethsemane, when friends sleep, and powers of darkness assail and circle it with horror. Take your life, friend, and single out some such hour; an hour in which virtue and honor, peace of conscience, and faith in God, stood trembling in the balance; an hour when unexpectedly, and by no fault of yours, the power of evil ambushed your path, and set upon you on all sides at once, taking you by surprise; an hour in which all dear to you, all which might make life honorable or death peaceful, all that might crimson the portal of the grave, and in the azure above it reveal the anchor and the dove, reeled and staggered even unto falling. Praise the mercy of God to-day if in that hour of wind and rain the downbeating and onrushing violence of it swept not your house from its foundations.

But in the remembered trials of that hour, in the struggle and agony of it, in the resistance it elicited, in the bravery it demanded, in the pressure it put upon your virtue, behold the power of sin!

Or, again, leave a heart to its own natural tendencies ; let its natural proneness to sin go on unhindered unto its own supremely evil consummation ; let no restraints of virtuous education be put upon it ; let it be unhampered by the fear of public opinion ; remove the obstructions which legal enactments heave up in its murderous course ; take home and the schoolhouse, the voice of prayer and the entreaty of friendship, the admonition of wisdom, the pleadings of love, and the restraining sight of virtue, out of the world, — and into what anarchy, what violence, what barbarism, what licentiousness, what tiger-like ferocity, would not the world plunge !

Go down into North Street, go to your House of Correction, go to the cellars and garrets and brothels and dens of your city, and study the faces of those of either sex who burrow under the very roots of your metropolis ; notice their faces, bloated with drink, or hollow with want ; mark their bodies, out of which the divine spirit of cleanliness and decency has departed ; look into their eyes, in the lure and craving and cunning and effrontery of which every lurking devil of lust and appetite and lawlessness abides ; take up that infant, with its sharp, pinched face and fleshless limbs, fitter for the coffin than the cradle, — go, I say, and standing on the marge of this moral cesspool, with your feet in the muck and mire of its rottenness, look over into this sty of human animalism, which churches that ransack the globe for a spot to send a missionary tolerate under their very nose, and see in all this foul and purulent

mass of crime and corruption into what a depth of depravity the human heart, left to the law of its own natural tendencies, will plunge and sink and stay.

Well, is it owing to any redeeming quality in sin that this entire city is not like North Street? Take the world, and note the causes which have made one-half of it moral and civilized and humane. Observe what an infinite purchase-capacity God has been compelled to develop in order to heave human nature up even to that level of virtue on which society can exist, and estimate into what darkness and brutality the world would speedily lapse were the checks and restraints of knowledge and law and the Bible withdrawn.

Rejoice, Christians and non-professors alike, that no such thing can occur. The future may bring many a misfortune to man; but it can never bring such a calamity as that. Between the human heart and its natural tendency to wrong-doing a mightier than human power has taken its stand. Between the cradle and the grave are the merciful visitations of God; and there will they be forever. Along that road which is broad, which leadeth to destruction, and into which many shall enter, the angels of God, and those servants of his like unto angels, lacking not voice of entreaty, lacking not gesture of warning, shall stand, turning many from death unto life, snatching many as brands from the burning; and the souls of those who are saved will be jewels in the crowns of their rejoicing forever.

My friends, the phrase "desperately wicked" is one

of those descriptive phrases, one of those scraps of suggestive word-painting, most difficult for the mind to comprehend.

The mind goes up to it as a man goes cautiously up to an old shaft deep and dark, and to the eye bottomless. He stretches himself at full length along the edge, and peers shrinkingly over into it, but starts shudderingly back as a rush of cold, damp, impure air beats up into his face. He selects a stone, and casts it in. It bounds from side to side, publishing its progress downward by ever-decreasing echoes; and, when the last faint sound has reached the ear, it leaves upon the brain the impression that it is still descending, — whither, or how far, the listener can make no estimate.

Well, something like to that is the chasm in moral descent which this phrase opens. This pit of “desperate wickedness” — who can sound it? Call it hell, and drop your thought down into it, and many suggestions of horror like muffled echoes rise at first; but soon you reach a point where these fail, and no sound is upsent from its stupendous depth, and no thought comes like a swiftly-flying messenger to tell where lies the bottom of that dark passage and ever-darkening depth to which the wicked sink, or rather, I should say, into which the wicked are ever *sinking*. For sin is one interminable declension, an unchecked and everlasting descent. It has no fixed state or condition. It is motion downward; motion ever accelerated; motion never arrested. Hence the pit which is its home is *bottomless*. Hence the wicked

are ever growing more wicked, and the devilish more and more depraved.

You have seen the operations of this law ; your eyes have seen the development of this gravitating principle in depravity going on day by day in people ; ay, and at times felt it in your own bosoms.

Have not all of you who are present had periods of declension ? Can you not recall one and another season in your lives in which the inclination of your thoughts and acts was downward ? — a season in which you grew less honest, less circumspect, less pure, less careful ? You feel to-day that you are a better man or woman than you were then. You were not lost ; you did not make a castaway of yourself : but you know now that you came near doing it ; that, but for some intervening restraint and mercy, you would have gone on and on until you would have taken one step too far, and been lost. You waded far out enough to feel the pressure of that terrible current down which the wealth and honor and bodies of many men are being hurled to-day.

In view of that wickedness of which the heart of man is capable, in view of its hidden as well as its expressed transgressions, in view of its inward taint and tumors, its veiled leprosies and manifold deceits, well might the prophet exclaim, “ Who can know it ? ” Who shall ever thread the labyrinth of sinful motives through which the babe passed from the cradle to the gallows ? Who shall explore the dark caverns and recesses of human thought, and tell to the upper

world what monsters obnoxious to the sight, and horrible, are born and nourished there? Who shall force the entrance to those subterranean passages of man's sinful nature, and drag to light the evil ministers that wait on murder and blow hot the torch of conflagration? Who shall prove himself that chemist of character able to gather the sediment of our dispositions, and, by analysis, trace each impure combination, each low desire, each group of carnal craving, to their source, detect their basal elements, write out their law of growth, and catalogue them properly in the order of evil? If knowledge sufficient were unto any, who might endure the wrack and torture of the effort? No one. The human heart is a mystery; it is secret with the secrecy of shame and the caution of undetected guilt; and the judgment-day will be a day to astonish the universe because of the revelations it will make. The vindication of a penalty which now appalls some men will be seen at the unmasking and exhibition of a depravity more appalling yet.

Who then "shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I thank God, that, through Jesus Christ, I and all may be delivered. Through him man can obtain not alone remission of the penalty, but what to every noble nature seems far better, — deliverance from the taint and dominion of sin. I ask you who have never felt the quickening of the Spirit, who have never received into your hearts any divine impulse, to look at your natures thoughtfully a moment. Observe how full of vain and

wicked imaginations are your minds ; how essentially selfish are your plans ; how sordid, compared with the feelings of the heavenly-minded, are your desires. When you have thus soberly analyzed your own natures, look abroad over the world ; behold its iniquities, its lewdness, its cruelties, its oppressions, its wars and bloodshed, the vulture-like aptitudes which go out in search of pure things as hawks leave their dark perches and sail forth hunting for doves, — and then tell me if man is not “desperately wicked ;” tell me if any theory, any philosophy, must not be false that does not start out with a full and clear recognition that man is depraved.

There is a strong current setting against this generation, the tendency of which is to wash men and women out into a sea of loose opinions and looser practices. The old anchorages where our fathers outrode so many storms in safety are being deserted, albeit they lie within, and are enclosed round about by the headlands of God’s truth. Few would call me, I presume, a conservative ; and yet I have not to-day, and never have had, any sympathy with a radicalism that smites both gods and mummies alike. And I call upon each of you in your respective spheres, and according to the measure of your ability, to resist every tendency calculated to add to our present recklessness and impatience at wise and salutary restraint. I see that the old traditions are losing their hold on the public mind ; that the old customs are passing away ; that the old conservative habits of thought are dying out. I do not lament it. God allows

nothing to perish until it has answered its use. I only pray that they may be as the corn when it is cast into the earth, whose vital principle finds a fresher and nobler expression in dying, and discovers that death means nothing worse than a multiplication of its own life. The shuck is cast off; but it is cast off because the expanded and expanding germ within can no longer tolerate the bondage of its pressure. The future will be fuller in its girth, and nobler of stature, than the past. It will have strength and wisdom to do what the past could not do. It will be wise with that wisdom which comes alone from a knowledge of the failures and imperfections of the dead. I care not for forms; each generation has its own: I desire only that the truth which they express be cherished. The mode of expression and application will be changed from time to time; but let the doctrine itself, in all its integrity, abide.

SABBATH MORNING, MAY 28, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—RESISTANCE OF EVIL.

“SUBMIT YOURSELVES, THEREFORE, TO GOD. RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.”—James iv. 7.

NOTHING is more plainly taught in the Scriptures than that men are exposed to satanic influence. Indeed, the sacred writers as plainly announce the doctrine of a diabolical as a divine agency in the world. The very identical terms employed to teach the one are employed to teach the other. If they speak of God as opening the eyes of the understanding, Satan is said to “blind the mind, that it believe not.” If God “worketh in Christians to will and to do,” Satan is the “spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience.” If the sanctified are said to be “filled with the Holy Ghost,” “why,” said Peter to Ananias, “hath Satan filled thy heart?”

Such is the testimony of Scripture. It is plain and unequivocal. I know that there are people who deny the personal existence of Satan; but you have observed, doubtless, that this class seldom believe in the personality of God. According to this class of writers and thinkers, God is that principle of order

which is ever working itself out in all manner of lovely sights and sweet sounds ; and thus they poetize God into a supreme and volatile essence, until, to their mind, he has neither throne nor residence, nor aught of the coherence essential to the exercise of wisdom and power. And this, as you all see, strikes at the very existence of divine government ; for with the very conception of a government is associated the accompanying conception of a person or persons. Government means rule, authority, law, execution. But such ideas can exist only as you associate them with persons. Where there is neither ruler nor ruled, there is no government ; and, if one denies the personality of God, he denies also the existence of any moral government. And out of this denial is born, naturally as children are born of parents, license of thought and act, and the utmost security of indulgence. When there is no judge, no sheriff, no agents, to enforce law, then has law ceased, and you have simply civil chaos.

On the other hand, this same class, logically enough from the premise of their assumption, hold that Satan is merely an inharmonious principle, an unhappy and discordant element, at war with the element of order ; and that these two impersonal forces maintain their essential contest without individuality of purpose or feeling. There is to them no more personality, no more intelligence, no more moral antagonism, than between two currents, which, by the accident of locality, are brought in contact, and fret unconsciously against each other.

In this atheistical philosophy, — for you see that it is, to all intents and purposes, atheism, in that it practically denies that there is a God in any such sense as the Bible teaches, — in this atheistical philosophy, I say, many share ; and some, I fear, are practically in harmony with this belief who have never defined their feelings, or confessed them even unto themselves. The burden of their talk is, that society is full of evil influences ; that men are overcome by temptation, as swimmers in an evil hour are overcome by drifts and currents which seize them unawares and sweep them away ; that men are unfortunately exposed to temptations, and overcome. And all this, in one sense, is true. There are currents of impulse, and whirlwinds of passionate forces, and temptations numberless, to which we all are exposed. We have all felt these as the forest feels the wind. We have been blown against and buffeted, not once, but many times, and, it may be, prostrated by them. But these phrases do not state the whole truth ; they do not reveal the full analysis. Back of these tendencies is and must be one who directs them. The moral realm is not a mere atmosphere. The movements in it are not like the movements of inanimate air-currents. Men are not like trees. Back of all agencies, evil or good, is and must be an Agent. For every effect there must be a cause. Over a world of intelligence there must be an intelligent Head, as there is an Author. Law, universal and harmonious, is not the result of chance. It is not by accident that the stars keep their orbits, and sweep around their golden cir-

cles with invariable precision. There is a hand that guides them around their eternally-appointed course. There is a central glory, by reflecting which they shine. The Bible theory is the only theory that can explain the manifest phenomena in the material and moral world. There is a God, personal in his attributes, and intelligent; the source of authority; the embodiment of wisdom, love, and power. There is, on the other hand, a being called Satan, equally individual; a creature of vast cunning and power and wickedness; the active, persistent adversary of God, and of those of us who desire in our hearts to be like God. There is such a being, therefore, as Satan; and, when men are commanded "to resist evil," it is not mere influences that they are enjoined to withstand, but the person, the evil mind and wicked heart, that directs them. Hell has its king; and all its black legions obey the voice that first hurled defiance at God. He lives and moves as the directing cause and mainspring of all the wickedness done under the sun. Murder, with its red hand and all its fingers dripping blood; Conflagration with her blazing torch; Rebellion that devastates; and all the lesser agents of evil,—these are his children. To deny this is to deny the Scripture; for this doctrine is as a central thread in its strongly-woven woof. It can be withdrawn only in the disruption of the entire piece.

This is the being, then, whom we are commanded to resist. And, among other reasons for so doing, I will mention, first, this,—our ability to do it. We *can* resist evil.

No one is compelled to sin. If sin is involuntary, then none would be responsible for it; for the sole guilt of sin lies in this, — the ability of the sinner to restrain himself. Hell is a voluntary association. If a man places the point of a dagger over my heart, and, seizing my hand with a power I cannot resist, presses it suddenly against the hilt, and drives it home, am I a suicide? Certainly not; because my will did not consent to the act. I was forced, compelled. The power to resist is not mine. But, observe, if I seize the knife myself, I care not under the pressure of what temptation, and, feeling for a place to get it in, enter it between the ribs, and crowd hard on it until the thin blade is buried to the hilt in the quivering flesh, am I not a murderer? Am I not guilty before God of taking my own life? And will not the unholy deed condemn me at the judgment? A man, you see, must be able to refuse in order to make his consent criminal.

Now, this is true in fact as well as theory. Experience is on the side of our argument. Look at it a moment.

My hearer, take some slip in your life, and examine it: I mean any of you. Pick out some particular day or hour in your life wherein you did wrong. Fasten your memory on some act or thought you now regret. Do you not remember how unpleasantly you felt before you did it, while doing it, — unless it were a sin of passion, and frenzied you, — and after it was done? Can you not recall, and feel over again almost, the revulsion which came over you after the transaction,

and conscience spoke up? Perhaps you halted, refused, debated, strove to shake yourself loose from the temptation, but at last, under the spell of its terrible fascination, yielded. For hours, perhaps for days, the scales swung in even poise; but finally Satan prevailed, and you did what you regret unto this day. How stoutly virtue defends itself! and how gradually come upon us the approaches of sin! Well, it is in this halting process that we find proof of guilt. In the clear light of this inspection, man is seen to be the arbiter of his own destiny. The overtures of God and the Devil being made, between the two, the man himself, by a single and decisive act of his will, must make a decision. Hesitate as you may, struggle as you may, magnify your temptation all you can; yet all this can never undo the fact, that, to each suggestion of evil and good, you yourself make a decision. To each proposition of virtue and vice you finally say *Yes* or *No*. Nothing brings out so sharply the personality of man as some act of sin. It brings him out into the foreground as an agent. He has the universe as the witness to his conduct. His decision is *his* decision, and against God, in whom all which is assailable by vice finds expression.

I wish each of you, in whatever you may purpose of evil, to feel this. Upon the edge of this terrible ability to resist God plant yourself, and behold the abyss at your feet. Out of this thought comes also what might be called the *hopefulness* of morality. The assurance, "Resist the Devil, and he will *flee from you*," is a blessed and needed one. The thought

that you can succeed in keeping your hand and heart clean is a constant inspiration to persevere. The contest, as waged by every man and woman against evil, is no longer a heavy, dragging, spiritless contest, but a brave and hopeful one. Through the heavy, lead-like color of our despair breaks the flush of amber, of orange, and of rose. The current we stand in is deep, swift, and hissing; and who of us, at times, is not swayed and staggered by it? But there is no reason why, by care and effort, — a careful placing of the feet, and keeping our powers well collected, — we cannot make headway against it. We do make headway. I trust there is no one of you, who has lived any considerable number of years, who does not feel that you are better, more noble and honest, than you once were. May God keep all of us from living a life like to a corpse in this, — that the passage of time brings nothing but darker discoloration and corruption to it! I take no sombre view of humanity. The heaven working in the race is not inoperative. The Light that has come into the world, and shined upon so many hearts, is quickening the germinal capacities of man for virtue. The race is slowly but surely forging ahead. The waters behind are white with the freshening breeze; and the purposes of God, like a mighty wind, will put an increasing pressure upon the sails, and blow them grandly along. As a fleet of great merchantmen, impelled by the steady trade-winds, — their yards like bars of gold, their ropes like lines of ruby, — go sailing at morning toward the east and the rising sun; so the race, in all its powers

and motives, will be grandly luminous as it moves on into the light of the millennium.

To realize the full effect of this thought upon character, to see how much it weighs in the balance of man's conduct, single out some young man in this audience, and observe its effect upon him. Grant that he has sense enough to see that his present course is leading him downward, conscience quick enough to regret it, and virtue enough to wish that it were not so: in brief, imagine him standing in that position in which every young man stands once or twice in his life, in which he asks himself, "Can I be good?" Suppose some habit has fastened itself on him, and, leech-like, is so drawing the blood out of him, that he is frightened, and says, "Would to God I could deliver myself of this!" Now, it makes a great difference with that young man's conduct, as he debates that question, — the most momentous question of his life, upon the decision of which all his life hangs, — what conclusion he arrives at. The worst possible feeling that he can yield to at that moment is that of despair. Then, too, it is that the value of a hopeful, cheering word, a friendly grip of the hand, or even a look bespeaking confidence in him, is incalculable. It acts as an electric shock on the benumbed powers of his moral nature; it puts stiffness into his weak will; it banishes the dark and gloomy thoughts out of his heart, and strings him up to the requisite tension. Out of such a loose, unstrung life, some of God's best melody often comes.

Now, in such a crisis, the man must feel that he

can succeed, or he will not even try. Every starter must have some hope of winning, or he will not enter to run. Hence the significance of this promise. It follows the command as the bugle of victory follows the deadly charge. It is God's premium on effort morally directed. The promise, you observe, is unqualified. It is not, "Resist the Devil, and he *may* flee from you ;" but he *shall* do it. Subtle and cunning as he is, persistent and eager as he is, yet in him is no power to make successful resistance to him, who, panoplied in noble determination, does battle for his life and the life of his soul. There are crowns hidden somewhere in the future for all ; and, for hands that grasp the sword of the Spirit, palms and harps are waiting.

To live ignobly, friends, is, therefore, to live unworthy of your clearest possibilities. In the waters of this assurance the dirtiest may wash and be cleansed. Behind the impossibility of betterment no one can take refuge ; for there is no such impossibility. Circumstances may be against you, past habits against you, present irresolution against you ; but your future is unencumbered. The Devil holds no mortgage on that. It is yours to have and to hold, young man, and use as you see fit ; and God, through this text of ours, comes to each one of you to-day, and asks you how you will use it. "I care nothing about your past," he says : "every day may have been squandered. Here is the future. Not a day of it has been touched, not an hour used. I give it to you as a free gift, with all its chances of

improvement, its opportunities of usefulness, its exhortations to virtue. Only 'resist evil,' only stand firm, only try, and whatever of good you in your better moments crave will come to you, and abide with you, as the light of the sun to-day comes to the earth, eliciting its manifold fruitage, and illuminating it from pole to pole. Yea, your life shall be like a globe belted and zoned with expressions of life; and never shall there be an hour when some portion of it shall not be in flower and fruitfulness."

This, then, is what constitutes the ugliness of sin, — that it is done from the *heart*. The author of sin is not content to increase sin merely: he wants sinners as well as sin. He strives not only to scatter the venom, but to multiply fangs. He desires, also, men to be sinful in and of themselves, — powers to work for him independent of him, as it were. He delights to have his agents do their work with a personal relish in it; and thus he sustains through all his hellish legions a certain fiendish *esprit de corps*. Even as God wishes voluntary saints, Satan longs for voluntary devils.

But again: the wisdom of this injunction, "Resist the Devil," is seen when you reflect, that in resistance, and resistance alone, is safety. Between this and some other course there is no election: you must fight, or die. My friends, on some streams you can drift: but, in the rapids which plunge hellward, no man can lie on his back, and float; he must keep in quick nervous action, or sink. In his desire to possess the soul, Satan is insatiable. He does not want followers: he wants slaves. He is never satisfied until he gets the

soul under his feet. When his foot is on its neck, and he can put the pressure of hell upon it at any moment, he is content ; not before.

Take the drunkard as an illustration. Consider by what easy stages Satan posted him to his ruin. Was not the first glass sweet, and its taste pleasant? Did it not give play to fancy, and delightful fluency to the tongue? Did it not warm the blood, and thrill the nerves? Poverty, dishonor, disease, and a loathsome death, were not revealed to his eye as he drained the glass, proffered, perhaps, by beauty's hand. Would to God they had been! Would that he might then have seen standing there, glass in hand, amid the gayety that rippled around him, rising in vivid vision out of that beaded glass, the woes that were to come in long and ghastly procession! Would that he could have seen the rags and tears, and heard the wails and the swift-smiting curses, that were to be for him and his! Then would the coiled serpent have been revealed; and, with one quick, nervous resolution, he would then and there have cast the horrid peril from him. My people, do you ever think of the number of the graves where drunkards sleep? How heavily revolves the earth under the burden of these! — heavily, I say; for every grave is weighted, not with iron or lead, but with that which is far heavier than these in the balance of God, — despair. “Write on my tombstone,” screamed a dying drunkard once, — “write on my tombstone, and make the letters large, and hew them deep; write but one word, ‘Despair!’” There is not a person here, I presume, who would stab a man: yet

there are men here into whose side you had better drive a knife, and let life out forever, than to offer a glass of wine ; for, should they drink, out of them would go what is sweeter and nobler than life, — hope and love, and fealty to virtue. Yet are there women who forget not to pray at night ; who, in their ignorance or thoughtlessness, have caused men to become drunkards. Such ignorance, formerly, God winked at ; but now has he caused such light to shine upon this question, that those who sin must sin against light. O my people ! pray for the men who stand in peril ; put the arms of your solicitude around them, and steady them ; strengthen the weak will ; confirm the feeble purpose ; help them to resist the Tempter. When we have done our utmost, thousands even then will perish. Alas for the men who rot out of existence ; who are like trees when sap and life are gone, — unsightly formations of exhaustion and decay !

If ever one might pray to die, it is such. If ever the silver cord might be loosed or the golden bowl be broken without regret, it is then, when life has lost not only its joys, but its usefulness, and the remorse of the present has rendered the future harmless. Oh charitable the earth that consents to cover such ! Oh kind the graves that hold and hide such wrecks and secrets of pollution !

But Satan is cunning ; and as the strokesman pats the neck of the silly beeve until he has noosed it for the slaughter, so he beguiles man until he has him fully in his power. No moderate drinker but that laughs at the idea of ever being a drunkard ; and yet

every drunkard of to-day is from the ranks of the moderate drinkers of twenty years back, and every drunkard of twenty years ahead will come from the ranks of the moderate drinkers of to-day. Thus is it with all its doings. Hell is patient; but it is the patience which springs from the knowledge that certain causes inevitably lead to certain results. Young men, by gradual processes, are brought to be drunkards. By the same devilish gradations, young girls, spotless and white, are made to fill brothels. And thus, converging from every village and city in the land, from houses and cradles widely apart, the vast throng, a mighty caravan of lost souls, moves to the gates of hell with jest and mirth, the clash of cymbals, and the uplifting of insanely-jubilant feet.

The fact is, there is no end to wrong-doing or ill-feeling if you once begin, unless you break sharp off. Give temptation, — I do not mean temptation in the abstract, but temptation as it comes to you every day in the daily round of business and pleasure, — give it, I say, a spot on which to rest its lever, and it will topple over the stoutest virtue. A man should literally “*watch and pray*” if he would keep out of peril. Some people, perhaps all of us at times, coax the Devil to enter them. They unnecessarily and repeatedly put themselves in the way of temptation. Like the shining fish on the edge of the maelstrom, they play about in the terrible suction of their appetites. They recklessly dash into currents in which not one man in ten can stand. What wonder you are growing to love money too much, my hearer? do

not all your surroundings nurse the passion? Look at the company that young man keeps, the character and habits of his chums, the places to which he resorts, and tell me if it is any wonder that his employers are anxious, and his friends alarmed. It seems to me, at times, as if men searched for currents to sweep them away, and pits into which to stumble. I am fast growing to think that what men call temptation is very often nothing short of sheer, criminal carelessness; and that the apostle James covered the whole ground, and exhausted the resources of statement, when he insisted that men were tempted when "led away by their lusts and enticed."

In view of what we have said, receive the exhortation of the text.

Resistance of evil is the only way to overcome evil. All of us will be assailed. Let us put on, therefore, the whole armor of God. Above all, see to it that your resistance has a heart in it. There is a seeming resistance which is not real resistance; and the Devil knows it. There is a hesitating, half-and-half kind of refusal, which invites a second solicitation. The Tempter loves to hear a man say "No" as if he wanted all the while to say "Yes;" for he knows that such a person is really with him at heart, and will be with him in act ere long. Satan sees when you have a secret hankering after what you profess not to like: he knows when you are virtuous from a fear of the consequences rather than from a high sense of obedience.

I feel that some of you may be of the number of those to whom life in the flesh is but one prolonged battle. To this you were predestined at birth. The elements of contention were distilled into you through either parent. Like Hercules, you may be said to have contended with serpents in your cradles. Would, as did he, you had slain them ! Remember that you are at once pilgrims and crusaders : with mailed hand and blistering feet you must urge your way toward the holy city ; and only after years of conflict, fought out in deserts and on mountain-side, — conflicts unpublished and unknown, — faint, and covered with scars, bleeding from many an unhealed wound, — never until then will you find peace and victory as you lay yourselves down at the tomb of Christ, and die.

But let me encourage you. Into the din of your conflict with Satan I launch this note of inspiration : Feel that, no matter how thick the foes may swarm, victory lies ahead ; feel that there is a nobler life than you have thus far lived awaiting you ; that there are new and higher orders of thought to which your intellect shall yet climb ; ranges of feeling inexperienced as yet on the earth, whose joy is yet to be yours, and aspirations which shall grow to you in the fulness of time as wings to waiting birds. Oh that a breath might come to you to-day out of that fragrant future ! Oh for a glimpse of that transparent atmosphere, through which, as we see the blush in alabaster, the pure in heart see God ! The fathers sleep beneath us ; the race along the incline of privi-

lege and opportunity moves upward, and will continue to move until their feet shall stand upon that table-land which marks the summit of human development, where Christ "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Then, standing amid the ransomed race, in the midst of that blessed state of which he is the source and cause, shall he say, "For this I died. To make men strong in goodness, and equal in privilege; to make them Godlike in their state, as the Father made them Godlike in their faculties, — this was my object. No longer may the souls that are beneath the altar complain; for wickedness among men is ended, and I behold the blossoming of that consummate flower, which, through all these ages, was nourished and perfected of God." Then shall a shout arise such as heaven had never heard or felt until then, and a choral worthy of the audience and the hour shall swell; and the words that ride like stately ships upon the waves of sound shall be, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Who here is resisting evil? Who here, in the spirit of which I have spoken, is acting as our text enjoins? And who of us, ashamed of our weak and half-hearted resistance in the past, are pledging ourselves to a more strenuous and persevering resistance in the future? The heart ready to make that pledge is ready to receive God's blessing, and in that state of readiness has already received it.

SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 4, 1871.

SERMON.*

SUBJECT.—LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY.

“WHETHER, THEREFORE, YE EAT OR DRINK, OR WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO
ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.”—1 Cor. x. 31.

THIS injunction has been and is greatly abused in practice, and in two entirely opposite ways. The one party abuses it by paying no attention to it at all. They care nothing about God's glory; they do not strive to advance it; it is a matter of supreme indifference to them: they care nothing for it one way or the other.

The other party is composed of those who do care about it, and, indeed, are exceedingly anxious that they may fulfil this injunction perfectly. Giving the most literal and matter-of-fact interpretation to the command, they worry themselves over every little detail of conduct and each individual act. They are morbidly sensitive. They are Christian legalists, good-hearted Pharisees. Among them are many whose piety is ignorant, whose minds are narrow and illogical,—people unable to see but one tree in a landscape. As a class, they are quite accurately typed and represented by a good old saint who came

* This or the next issue will be the last till the close of Mr. Murray's vacation, —Sept. 3.

to belabor me once because I played chess : and who ended the discussion, and exhausted argument, to her own mind at least, when she exclaimed, " Can you believe, Mr. Murray, that moving those heathenish idols of bone over a board with Masonic characters upon it is acting for the glory of God ? " She regarded that as conclusive, — a shot between wind and water ; and, having delivered it as a farewell volley, departed.

I have heard a deal of nonsense and stupidity based upon this text. I have heard it so interpreted in prayer-meeting exhortation, and even in one or two sermons, that no human being could obey it ; and all the good it did was to disgust the sensible, and pain the conscientious but unlearned disciple. But no one has any right to so interpret and apply truth as to make it a stumbling-block to the soul that is honestly striving after goodness. We have no right to so define a command as to make obedience to it simply impossible.

Now, friends, I will speak for a few moments in exposition of this passage ; will show you how it cannot, and how it can, be obeyed. You shall have my idea of it, and the standpoint from which I regard it.

The question first is, " What is meant by the 'glory of God' ? When is a thing done for the 'glory of God' ? "

Fix first in mind this thought, that no deeds of ours add to or detract from God's glory. He is himself the source of his own glory. There is not an angel or saint in heaven that can add a single beam to the

radiant orb of his perfection; there is not a devil in hell or a sinner on earth that can pluck out or darken a single ray of that divine brightness which fills all heaven with light. God's glory is not contingent on the acts of any creature. From all eternity he has been what he is; and to all eternity will he remain the same.

When we do any thing for the glory of God, it is not to increase, to add to, his glory, — for that we can never do, — but to bring his glory out, and make it appear to the eyes of men. We do not give him what he has not, but cause what he has to be seen of men. A man who acts worthily, as God enjoins, causes men to acknowledge the source and origin of his worthiness. Thus the mother is honored when her son is honored; so, too, her virtue shines again in the virtue of her daughter. Any honorable conduct, any graciousness of speech, any sweetness of disposition, which recognizes God as its author and source, is for the glory of God; that is, makes the essential elements of his character to be loved.

Now, this definition does away with that objective obedience to our text upon which so many insist, and substitutes a subjective form of obedience. It forbids the particularizing of acts and motives, and takes into view the habitual state of the soul and the tenor of the life. Now, we all know that the human mind is subject to many motives; that these motives are of various degrees of intensity. God did not make man to act as a piece of machinery held to its course by bolt and screw: he made man

for liberty, — the liberty of self-action. In all his impulses and sympathies there is a wide margin, a lateral sweep and swing of his powers, a certain playfulness and unrestrained action of his faculties. One duty, also, often includes other duties: the many are wrapped up in the one, — some larger, some smaller. We cannot do them all at once. We cannot have one and the same feeling in doing them. One duty demands for its performance a great impulse; another is served by a much weaker incentive. One fixed state of mind, of invariable intensity, depth, and fervor, is not expected nor required. Take, for an illustration, a father's feelings toward his children and household. Take a business-man down town, as he sits in his office, or pushes past you on the streets. Of what is he thinking? Is it of wife and children? Not at all. In thought he is making a bargain. His affections are not now in the ascendancy; but judgment, calculation, forethought, are uppermost. Yet he is a father and a husband as truly as if he had his boy on his knee, and his wife by his side. He is fulfilling his duty as head of a family, although he is not at the moment thinking of his family. He is walking by the light of the sun, although his eye is not on the sun. He is performing a great duty, although the duty is not in his mind at all.

Something like this is our relation to God. The great duty of our life is to glorify him; but they make a great mistake who think that that must continually be the uppermost thought. A carriage-maker

does not make a wheel all at once, but spoke by spoke ; and, when he is shaping a spoke or a felly, he is thinking about that, and not of the entire wheel. The highest motive is not always necessary or proper. A butcher is doing his duty when he kills a beeve ; but it would be nonsense, not to say impiety, to ask him if he dealt the blow or used his knife for the glory of God. A Christian has no right to vulgarize his religion by such forced interpretations ; he has no right to put a strained significance upon or make a strained application of a passage which was written to express a great principle, — too great to be expressed by any one act of our life, but by the life taken as a whole. A boy does not slide down hill or skate, or a girl play croquet or practise calisthenics, for the glory of God ; and yet these sports are innocent and healthy. Taken in connection with the entire life, the physical development and formation of character, they are in perfect accord with the injunction of our text ; but taken in a detached, a separate sense, they fulfil nothing but pure youthful vivacity and physical impulse.

Our idea is, then, of this passage, that it is to be taken in its large, general sense. It has no application to pudding and pies, playing chess and whist, and the thousand and one accompaniments of physical and social life. It is intended to cover the main drift and tendency of a life, and not particular acts, momentary impulses, and transient states of feeling. It is globular, and not atomic. It is vast as the earth, and not minute and special as a grain of sand.

You have now my ideas in respect to this passage

touching its significance and limitations. Under our conception of it, it cannot be abused, perverted, or vulgarized. It points directly to the existence in the human soul of one central and all-including motive, not antagonistic to, but in perfect harmony with, countless other motives, as the trunk of the tree is in harmony with the branches and the numberless outlying leaves. It makes fulfilment possible, and hence a duty. It exalts and ennobles life, without vulgarizing by false applications the divine rule by which we are to live. It makes what was painful soothing to the anxious conscience, and forbids ignorance and hypocrisy to appropriate it to their own low and unscriptural uses.

This, then, is what I regard as the true scope and significance of the passage ; and I will proceed at once to the application.

And, in the first place, it is an exhortation to all human creatures, and especially to all professed Christians, to give in all their doings a due recognition of God.

To start with, by nature man is his own god. Self-love rules. It is his own interest he is looking after ; it is his own fame and honor he is striving to establish ; it is his own gratification that he seeks. The mass of men live selfish lives. Seventeen men out of every twenty that you meet on the street are planning and working for self. The rights of others, save as their own are included therein, the good of their neighbors, above all, the "glory of God," is not in all their thoughts. This is man's state by nature, the

demonstration of which position is to be found both in the Scriptures and in our own consciousness. But Christians are people whose nature has been changed, renewed. We are not as we were. We stand, not as the earth stands at night, when the heavens are cold, and the ground damp, and every beauty is hidden in gloom, but as the world appears in the morning, when the air is genial, and the ground warm, and all the loveliness of hill, river, and plain, is brought out by the light of the risen sun. For the Lord has shined upon us out of his glory, and the otherwise dark orbs of our lives are luminous. Still we are not immaculate. Even the finest texture can receive a stain. We are as those who walk through crowds, arrayed in white and with flowing robes. We are pushed against, and soiled. We are creatures of habit also. As tuneful birds will catch a sweet or a vicious note from hearing it, so we borrow discord from discord around us. Even the best forces of our nature lead us astray. Economy, unless watched, becomes sordidness ; ambition, unscrupulousness ; pride, arrogance ; self-esteem, vanity. From all these and countless other causes, we are operated upon to our hurt. The goal is lost sight of in the dust of the course ; and, owing to the multitude and rush of the runners, we get excited, lose self-control, and like a vicious or frenzied horse, when in the very home-stretch, bolt. This text has, therefore, to us all, fellow-Christians, a solemn and needed application. It exhorts us to recognize God in all our plans and purposes, — recognize his authority over us, his ownership in us,

his gracious love for us. I think a vast deal of this last thought, — God's love for us as a restraining and reforming power in our hearts. Why, what cannot love do? By the power of it, men lost to all sense of manhood have been reformed. Its hand has touched the shoulders of thousands when they stood poised on the brink of precipices, about to take the fatal leap; and the would-be suicide turned back, and bore for years the burden of life without murmuring. It has entered the room of raving madness; spoken one word; and, at the sound of it, madness has departed, and Reason returned with tears of joy to her throne. It has gone in search of the lost, found them, and led them back to duty and home. Its power, being of God, is omnipotent. It is that one thing to which death yields; and the grave, hallowed by its presence, becomes a bower, where spirits come down and hold communion with flesh, relieving the gloom around it with a presence bright with the radiance of the skies. And if there is a soul here in the divine presence at this moment, a worn, jaded, discouraged soul; a single man who has lost confidence in his fellow-men, and even in himself; or a woman over whose life, as over a summer's landscape, a frost has come, and bitter winds blown and shaken all her hopes down like withered leaves, — I declare to all such my belief that God's love has come and is coming down into this church to bless them to-day, and is here and now seeking to enter into their hearts of wretchedness, and make them hearts of joy.

Now, my people, the exhortation of this text to

you all is, Bring out more prominently to your minds, realize more fully in your feelings, the existence and supervision of God. Let this thought come down upon and mingle with the soil of your lives as the rain permeates the soil of the earth. Such a belief, heartily received into the soul, makes a most fruitful impression on a man's conduct. A thousand dormant sensibilities, like long-sown seeds, unquickened by reason of drought, suddenly become germinant at its touch, and the sterile nature is clothed with heavenly verdure. Put this recognition of God as a pilot at the helm of your life; let it steer you across the sea of all your worldly plans, direct you in all your purposes, — and your soul will come to the conclusion of its voyage as a rich-freighted ship, blown by favoring winds, comes into port with her sails all lighted up with the glory of a summer's sunset. Even trouble will be to you, in your relation to God, what night is to the sky above your head. Its shadows are, indeed, sombre and oppressive; but, without its darkness, you would never have known the stars.

My second remark is, that the passage exhorts us to a wise gravity.

I fear that half the lives lived are frivolous lives. Not a few, especially among the female portion of society, are living without an object. Half of them are educated not to have an object; that is, they are brought up in such a manner that they cannot very well have any object in life. They are protected by an unwise affection from both the necessity and the opportunity of labor, — that postern-gate through

which each faculty must pass to reach its throne. They are surrounded with brain-softening and energy-sapping leisure : their life is one sterile desert of unemployed time. I cannot expand this thought to-day as I wish I might. I believe that I have the pleasure of speaking weekly to an audience, a large majority of whom is composed of workers both in material and moral directions. I cherish as a precious thought the belief that you represent a very high average of effort and usefulness. Half the strength of my ministry would go out of me, and all its joy, should the suspicion ever enter my head that I was preaching to a cluster of drones. A man works better in company than he does alone. It is dreary business to hoe in a ten-acre lot of corn without a comrade. Toil never so hard, you eke your way so slowly into the wide expanse of growing weeds ! It is a cheering thought that fifty other men are preaching around me in the city to-day. We seldom meet ; we may not know each other by face : but I know that they are hard at work, and they know that I am ; and so, by a kind of unconscious co-operation, we uphold each other. Did you ever think that the mass of the church are to the pulpit what the tide is to a ship ? You buoy it up, and keep it afloat. You make it able to carry God's freight of instruction and reproof, of warning and appeal. It is not the ships alone that do the commerce of, and build up, the world : every drop of water under their keels contributes a share to the glory and wealth of a nation's marine. And so every praying soul, every sympathetic heart, every friendly face,

every trusty hand that meets warmly the seeking palm, contributes its proportion, and adds its share, to make the ministry a ministry of power.

But it is possible, that, in such a throng of friends and strangers, there may be some living without a purpose, — living lives devoid of energy and object. If such a one is here, listen to me. How dare you live in idleness (you call it leisure) when the best voices of the world are calling for help? How dare you fritter away your time in self-amusement? How can you sit and play with tinted shells upon the beach, when on the crest of every wave that rolls in against the rocks appears a white and ghastly face, and arms toss, and, mingled with the roar of the deadly waves, a thousand voices cry, “ Help us, for God’s sake ! or we sink ” ? Is this the time to dance and chat, and plan for selfish pleasure, when the Spirit of God is calling upon you for service “ with groanings that cannot be uttered ” ? Cease this life of frivolity, of ease, of selfish pleasure, which you have been living. Cease to be a floating feather that has no object, and knows not its own path. Become a drop of rain, at least, to some herb or plant that is dying for want of moisture beneath you. Help some one ; lift some one. I charge you, to-day, to put some action for man and God into your life, or you shall be to man and God what those feathers are to the eagle, which, too dull for ornament, and too weak for power, he plucks from out his wings, and casts upon the gale, while he soars in disdain away.

Now, the first thing for one to do who would live for the glory of God is to live without sin. He who

sins cannot glorify God. It is in virtue and personal holiness that man most glorifies his Maker. There is an objective service, by doing which we serve God ; but there is a subjective work, a work in our own souls, which, being well done, exalts him even more. I pray all you young people not to overlook this. Within yourselves is the great vineyard you are to till. Woe to the Christian who neglects himself ! Woe to the man who keeps his eyes fastened on his neighbor's lamp, and lets his own go out ! When the Bridegroom comes, that man shall not go in with him to the feast. At the judgment, when all heaven shall see you, and you shall see yourself as never before, the examination will be into the condition of one soul. Whose soul will it be ? — your wife's ? your husband's ? your friend's ? your pastor's ? No : it will be concerning the condition of *your own*.

My friend, I would not abuse the privilege of my office by becoming inquisitorial. I would not obtrude an offensive curiosity upon you. I seek not to enter the closet in which hang the secrets of your life. My eye is not enough like Christ's to look upon the condition of your heart : I would not see its wealth or poverty if I could. Search the closet yourself. While we stand with averted faces, open the door, and enter in where you can see in the condition of your soul the results of your life up to this point of your career, — the traces which the years have left upon you. How does it look ? what is its condition ? Outwardly you are all right ; I see nothing amiss in you : but God looketh not at the outward appearance, but at the

heart. My exhortation, therefore, is, that you seek to purify *that*. Be so good, that you shall never be able to appear as good as you are. Do not deem this charge strange. Holiness can never perfectly express itself in the flesh. It is beyond and above mortal expression. It needs the heaven, it needs the spiritualized form and feature, it needs the celestial sphere of duty and life, it needs God's presence, it needs the employment of the skies, before it can ever be fully seen. Have you such a holiness in you, a pent-up holiness, a holiness fettered by the flesh, a holiness which, like a caged bird, can never show its power of wing, never express its full capacity of song?

There is one other application given to this passage by certain people which I regard as unjust and unwise. They make it an exhortation to solemnity. They hurl it against all manner of light and healthy amusement. They thrust it as a gag into the mouth of mirthfulness to prevent laughter. There are people who are not willing to let men and women remain as God made them, but would shave down, and clip off, and make them all over again. I receive a letter almost every day, proposing to take me in hand, and make me all over into an entirely different sort of a man. I dare say that there is need enough of it; and I trust that time, and God's transforming grace, will make all needed changes. But, somehow or another, I never could bring my mind to put much confidence in these social and moral tinkers. It makes a vast difference what model a sculptor has when he begins to chisel; and if this class of people

should model me over, and make me like unto themselves, I should be "of all men the most miserable"! Now, this passage, although appropriated by this class of people, does not belong to them, as I have shown. It enjoins innocence and earnestness, and recognition of God in our lives; but it does not interfere with the exercise of those emotions and impulses which give dash and relish to our daily life. Least of all has one the right to put a harsh and arbitrary application to it as a bar to social and domestic enjoyment. The question all turns on this: What is for God's glory? And I hold that the innocent exercise of every faculty with which he has endowed us is for his glory; for sure is it that he would never have bestowed any faculty upon us, which, being exercised along the line of its evident adaptation, would not be for his glory. Now, the exercise of one faculty is no more, in itself considered, for the glory of its Maker, than another. Gravity is no more honorable to God than mirthfulness. There are more exhortations in the Bible to praise than to prayer. Yet you find people constantly talking and acting on the assumption that laughter is not religious, — not fit for God's presence; and that, if one cannot contain his feelings, if his gratitude and happiness must find expression, he must let them out, not in a gush of song and shout, in which the whole body shall sympathize as did Miriam's with her companions when she danced her dance of joy before the Lord for their deliverance, but in a kind of religious wail. I object on the most serious grounds to all such views.

They mislead people as to what is the nature and result of Christian life. God does not drive us into his vineyard nor keep us there by bolt and shackle and whip. 'I am not forced to serve Christ any more than I was driven to love him. I do it of my own free will, and therefore cheerfully. The average state of a Christian soul should be a happy one. Christians should sing while they work, as birds while building their nests and gathering food for their young. I remember hearing a story of a ferryman who agreed to take a lovely girl, who was flying from a cruel father, over the river; and, before starting, he turned to her lover, and said, "As long as you hear me singing, you may know we are safe." Well, they started. Darkness and the storm closed in upon them; but ever and anon, through the roar of the gale and the surge of the billow, came to the anxious listener, ringing loud and clear, the notes of the boatman's song. This is precisely the case with those who are seeking escape from Satan. Amid no matter what perils, I never despair of a soul; for while, over the roar of a fiercer storm and the surge of wilder billows, I can hear it singing as it toils at the oar, I feel it is safe. Many of you will remember that passage in "The Pilgrim's Progress" where a disciple is represented as going down into a dark valley; and, as he is creeping along, he begins to shudder and be afraid: but just as he is about to give up, and turn back in despair, he hears a strong, clear voice ahead of him, chanting, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

evil," and he takes courage, and goes on. Brave song, that! And so, perhaps, my good brother or sister in Christ, there may be some poor soul back of you creeping along with fear and trembling amid the experience of life, poor, timid, and heart-broken. You cannot go back and creep with him; you cannot grope amid the darkness of that despair with him: but you can do one thing, — you can lift up your voice, and sing some song of holy confidence, some sublime hymn of trust; and God shall float the sounds back to that halting soul, and he shall be cheered and strengthened and saved by your joy.

And now, friends, I have told you, in brief, how this passage looks to me; what its limitations are on the one hand, and what its scope is on the other. I have only opened the door, and brought your feet to the threshold. Move along into the vestibule; thence advance in thought until you stand beneath the vast and uplifted dome that roofs this sublime injunction. Uncover your heads as you stand beneath it, yourselves dwarfed by its colossal proportions. Hear the swell and roll of the anthem poured forth by unseen choirs; breathe the air whose every particle is fragrant with the incense of praise unto the Lord, until you catch the inspiration of those who wait and serve ceaselessly and in joy before God, and you say, in a voice such as a man uses, when, in the hush of evening, he kneels in prayer at the base of mountains, "Grant, O Thou that strengtheneth man! that whatsoever I do, whether I eat or drink, I may do all for thy glory. Grant this, O Lord! and I ask no more."

SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 11, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT. — MINISTERIAL VACATIONS: THEIR NECESSITY AND VALUE.

“LET HIM THAT IS TAUGHT IN THE WORD COMMUNICATE UNTO HIM THAT TEACHETH IN ALL GOOD THINGS.” — Gal. vi. 6.

IN many passages of Scripture, allusion is made to the duty of the churches to keep in mind the happiness and well-being of those whom God, in the ways of his providence, has appointed as their spiritual teachers. The duty to watch over and care for each other is reciprocal between a pastor and his people. He must spend and be spent for them; and they are to make all needed contributions to him. I wish, in this discourse, — the last I shall make to you before I leave on my vacation, — to speak to you, and through you to the public at large, upon a subject which I regard of the utmost importance, because it relates to the happiness and usefulness of many earnest and devoted men now laboring with the churches in the ministry of Christ. The topic I have selected, under which to group certain suggestions, is, “Ministerial vacations: their necessity and value.” If, by speaking, I shall, to any considerable extent, succeed in calling the attention of the churches to the subject,

if I shall cause them to better understand and appreciate the labors and necessities of their respective pastors, I shall have accomplished my object, and feel amply rewarded.

I speak without embarrassment upon this otherwise delicate subject, because, in the first place, I present the claims of men, who, as a class, are confessedly laborious in their habits. The clergy of the nation can challenge comparison with any other equal number of men touching close application to the duties of their calling. They are hard workers. I do not hesitate to express the conviction, that no other men, either in business or professional life, work, on the average, so many consecutive hours in a day, as do those who fill the American pulpits. Certain it is that no other do any such amount of *night-work* as clergymen. The season divinely appointed and peculiarly adapted for recreation and rest is the one which the circumstances of the minister's life force him to devote to the severest toil. The day is often one of distraction, — full of changing duties and cares, which hurry him from one appointment to another, — so that composition is impossible. He turns to the night-season as his last resort. When his parishioners sleep, they cannot, at least, interrupt his toil. When, by every law of Nature, therefore, he should be in his bed, he can be found at his study-table. When his brain should be gathering strength in repose, it is being inflamed with intense activity. Night after night, for weeks together, have I sat, and worked at the composition of my sermons, from eight in the

evening until two o'clock in the morning: indeed, for months at a time since I came to this city, this has been the rule of my life. Nor is this habit so rare among clergymen as you might think. Scores and scores of men in the ministry are working nearly if not equally as hard. Their sleep is not regulated by the necessities of nature, but according to the demands of professional duty. They feel that it is wrong, abstractly considered; they know that it means premature aging, and perhaps death. But what can they do? They are in a current that runs so swiftly, that they dare not even turn the prow of the boat toward the shore. They must keep it in direct line, and not miss a stroke. I feel, therefore, as I said, no embarrassment in presenting the claims of these men to the courtesy of the churches, because, in the first place, they are industrious men. They are hard workers and willing workers. They are not shirks, nor idlers. Their works speak for them. Look at what they produce! Behold what they accomplish! Their voice and presence are everywhere. Observe their faces. Drones do not have such a look. Anxieties, cares, perplexities, disappointments, a sleepless activity of mind, — these have wrought their impression upon the faces of the men of whom I speak, and made the lines long, and hewn them deep. Standing with such an array of faces back of me, — faces of men whose joy it has been to bear the burdens of others as well as their own; whose joy it has been to spend and be spent for Him whose self-sacrifice for man has been the cloud and

pillar of fire to their lives ; whose joy it is, whether amid courtesy and appreciation, or rudeness and neglect, to give themselves for others' good, — standing thus, I say, I am not ashamed to present their claims.

Nor, in the second place, am I ashamed, because I speak not of these alone, but for the welfare of the churches also. In our church polity, the minister is, and must ever be, the prominent source of influence. The pulpit is with us the prime factor of power and usefulness. The sermon is the favorite agency in our method of evangelization. If the pulpit is weak, the church languishes, distractions occur, and religion is crippled in every phase of its manifestation. It may be that the system is in part wrong ; it may be that instruction pushes devotion too much aside ; that our congregations should be, beyond what they are now, worshippers as truly as students. Be this as it may, still the fact remains (and I think it would remain even if the change that we have hinted at should be made), that the pulpit is to-day the right arm of our power. Through it, our scholarship finds its most popular and efficient expression. Through it, applications of the Scripture are enforced, and the proclamation of the gospel most efficiently made. This is undeniable. But what, pray, *is* the pulpit ? and whence comes its power ? The interrogation answers itself. There is no power nor grace nor energy in the pulpit save as it exists in and is expressed by the individual members of the ministry. The minister who fills it is the pulpit. It is strong or weak according as he is strong or weak. Its

strength is individual, its weakness individual. Its potency is exactly graduated by the physical, mental, and spiritual condition of the man who for the time fills it. Whatever is adapted to make me strong in my bodily powers, fresh and active in mind, hopeful and aspiring of soul, is the very thing adapted to strengthen and bless you. My physical and mental condition, even my moods, affect you. You gain or lose by what is gain or loss to me. To borrow a couplet from England's laureate, —

“ We rise or fall together,
Dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free.”

The connection between a pastor and his people is a close and vital one, — even that of essence with essence, and mind with mind. The heaven of thought above us is one; and whatever darkens me casts a shadow upon you. This is the universal law dominant over all the churches. I seek to hasten the day when it shall be recognized; when the members of a church shall feel toward their pastor as children old enough to apprehend relations feel toward the head of the family. His health, his happiness, his prosperity, are precious to them, not alone because they love him, but because their condition is affected by his. They are rich when he is rich; they are poor when he is poor. This, then, is my proposition, that whatever is calculated to make the minister of a church healthier in body, fresher in mind, hopeful and unvexed in spirit, is, to the same extent, calculated to better the church of which he is the pastor.

It is, therefore, not alone the claims of the clergy, personally considered, that I present to-day, when I urge the churches to allow their several pastors time to rest, and recruit their overtaxed and nearly exhausted physical and mental powers, but the claims of the churches also, and, considered in its largest sense, the claims of religion itself.

So much by way of explanation. I will proceed now to point out briefly whence arises the need of an annual vacation to a pastor. Let us search for the causes which account for and gauge the lassitude and exhaustion which all clergymen in active service at times feel.

The first cause I would mention is intense and long-continued mental effort.

Above all other public speakers, the preacher must think profoundly and without intermission. The themes of which he treats are sublime; and their proper treatment demands great altitude of mind. His subjects are often extremely intricate, and call for great care in their analysis. Wide reading, and laborious comparison of many authors, he must not neglect. His work is largely that of creation of thought,—the most exhaustive of all mental processes. Other things being equal, the man who studies most preaches best. Granite, and chiselled granite at that, is what men bring together when they would build a palace. Now, every sermon should be a palace, constructed with sentences like polished stones, massive and fair to look upon, having in it somewhere a throne

of amethystine thought on which Christ is seated like a great king. Such sermons are not constructed in a day. The man who writes such a sermon must put his best life into it. Every faculty of his mind must be summoned and taxed. Memory, judgment, perception, imagination, the emotions, — all are laid under tribute. In this business, work tells. Genius alone never writes such discourses. Beaten oil is alone fit for the sanctuary. What is more wretched than to see a preacher make a verbal catapult of himself, and pelt his audience with words! When you hear a man yelling very loudly in his pulpit, you may know that he has thought very little in his study. A violent, red-in-the-face, perspiring kind of oratory has not the first element of appropriateness to it in the sanctuary. Such “gifted” preachers are, for the most part, gifted only as to their lungs. If I urge that these have a vacation, it is solely out of pity for their congregations. What a blessing it must be for a people to be delivered from such a man a whole month in the year! What a chance it would give the “still small voice,” which for eleven months had been drowned amid the crash of exploding vocabularies, to be heard! Why, an intelligent conversion might occur during the four weeks of such a man’s absence! •

Not only is it hard, brain-tasking work to prepare an instructive and soul-quickenng sermon, but it is a task that is never ended. There is no opportunity for the overworked brain to rest. No sooner is one sermon delivered than another must be begun. Even the sabbath, which brings to the mind of the lawyer and

the business-man a period of repose, only puts an additional burden upon the clergyman. The day which God ordained as a day of rest to all his creatures on the earth, — the wisdom of the appointment being seen even in the necessities of the lowest parts of our organization, — is, by the very nature of his office, a day of toil, and often of worry, to the minister. Thus the sabbaths repeat themselves; thus are his appointments inexorably multiplied in monotonous succession, — the tension upon his nervous system forever kept taut, and his work never done. His brain, like another Sisyphus, labors ceaselessly to heave up a stone, which is as ceaselessly rolling down upon it, — an ever-beginning, never-ending toil. No wonder that such work kills men; no wonder that the brain at last softens, and reason, like an overstrained cord, snaps. No wonder that pliancy departs from a bow that is never unstrung. I do not hesitate to say that lassitude and sluggishness of mind in such cases are salvation to the mind. Like the stupor which falls upon a beaten slave, making him insensible to the lash when agony longer felt would bring madness or death, it is the last and kind refuge which Nature has made that her noblest and best-loved child may not perish. When sermons grow dull; when the imagination of the preacher halts in its flights, and its creations no longer shoot up like morning birds out of the mist into the clear light; when reason falters, and the argument is evidently feeble; when the application lacks force, the suggestions pungency, and the exhortation is only like the sound of wind in the air,

that sways nothing, and shows no results, — know then, O ye listeners in the pews! that your minister is overworked; that his powers are exhausted, and imperatively need repose. Bid him then stop work. Treat him, at least, in the same spirit of love (which is that of economy also) that marks the conduct of the owner toward a favorite horse when the noble animal begins to show signs of overwork. Forbid that a harness be put on him, and let him rest.

It is just at such a point in his experience that further labor tells the most severely upon a minister. No one knows better when a sermon comes below the average than a preacher; no one feels it so poignantly. Oh the mortification of delivering a poor sermon before an intelligent audience! Who shall describe it? To come to your pulpit consciously unprepared; to feel, that, intellectually, you are going to your disgrace; to feel that friends will be disappointed; that enemies will find in your weakness the fulfilment of their malicious but iterated predictions; that your usefulness will be impaired, and the sublimity of religion itself unmanifested, — this, friends, to a capable and sensitive man, is torture. Such an experience during the day brings a sleepless night. To memory it is as a sting that has poison in it: it rankles; it leads to ministerial dejection and moodiness; it sours the temper, and introduces, at last, a fatal self-distrust into the mind. It is simple and downright cruelty to make a man preach when to preach means mortification and disgrace. The man is a brute who will scar with his spur the flank

of a blooded horse that has carried him with a magnificent stride for forty-five miles, unless the emergency is one of life and death; and I say (and I wish I could say it in every church in the land),—I say that it is likewise brutal for a congregation to compel an active-minded and willing servant of Christ to preach fifty-two sermons in a year, when at the forty-fifth he is evidently jaded and worn. There is a right and a wrong to this matter. It is a question of conscience as truly as of expediency. It is not a question of shrewd bargaining, but of mutual benefit.

There is another source of exhaustion which the pastor of a church must contend against, and which is liable to be overlooked or misunderstood by the majority of people, because not experienced by them. I refer to that tax which the circumstances of his life and surroundings levy upon his *emotional* nature. God has made the human heart extremely sensitive. It responds readily to exhibitions of suffering and distress. Nothing but gross barbarism releases men from the conditions of sympathy. Even nature, when not utterly brutalized, weeps with those that weep, and laughs with those that laugh. Men thus become connected. The isolation of selfishness, of barbarism, is broken into; and they humanely mingle in loving, sympathetic companionship. This beautiful characteristic religion fosters. Grace quickens the generous and noble elements of our natures, until, in the best expression of our lives, we have and share all things in common. Into this sensitiveness, this state of humane impulse, this life of love and

sympathy, the clergyman, by his very office and mission, is educated. The griefs of others become, in their effect upon him, his own. Their burdens and trials, their perplexities and disappointments, their dejections and sorrows, affect him deeply. He carries them all around with him in his thoughts: he rejoices that he can do it. But, nevertheless, the "care of all the church," added to his own personal and domestic cares, weigh him down grievously. They worry and distract his mind; they take the buoyancy out of him; they exhaust him as excessive weeping does the mourner. I realize how imperfectly I am expressing this; for the ten months in which I have stood steadily in this pulpit, with the exception of a single sabbath, in connection with my other cares, have exhausted me, and my mind works sluggishly. The memory reaches out too slowly to capture and retain the fugitive conception: but my brethren in the ministry, at least, will know what I mean; and their hearts will cry out, "It is all true! Beyond my brain-labor as a source of exhaustion to me has been my heart-labor. Emotionally I am even more exhausted than I am mentally. The burdens that my people cannot see are even heavier than those that they behold."

My friends, God grants unto every body and brain a certain amount of power. It is a definite quantity touching its expansion. Man can, in his best estate, accomplish only so much. On the other hand, it can be diminished down through all the grades of exhaustion. This, in the ministry as truly as in other professions

in our country, is to-day being done, and to a fearful extent. The ministry, as a class, are overworked and underfed. They are ill supplied with the means and appliances which they need in order to reach their highest usefulness for God and man. If the pulpit, as magazine-writers claim, is weak, the causes of that weakness can be easily ascertained. The flume is larger than the stream; the watershed of supply is scant, and the showers infrequent. Many of our churches are treating the ministry in the spirit of shrewd bargaining. The question before the committee is, "How little can we give, and how much can we get?" Strip it of all religious forms and pious cant, and that is just what you have left. Instead of voting a vacation to the pastor gladly, regarding it as a positive gain to them, they discuss it meanly, and vote it niggardly, as if they were voting a deprivation, and not a benefit, to themselves. I wish that the pastors over such congregations—and their name is Legion—would combine, and make a grand ministerial "strike," each of them saying, "Give me a chance to recruit my strength expended in your service, or else get you another man for your pastor." I would like to see a church, with such an advertisement of stupidity and meanness tacked to its name, go into the work of "candidating." It would have to "candidate" through three generations before it found a pastor, unless it discovered somewhere a man as mean as itself!

My friends, you have been trying for twenty years to run your pulpits on nervous force alone, unsup-

ported and unsustained by muscular power. The experiment is a failure. The number of dyspeptic, of consumptive, of broken-down pastors, of men obliged to retire from active ministerial labor at an age when they should be in their most glorious prime, proves this. This has been brought about by overwork, and also by a class of miserable "traditions" which have put a premium on narrow-chested and shrivelled-skinned men. In many country parishes of New England ten years ago, "consumption" and "spirituality" were synonymous terms. If the minister was blessed with an unnatural paleness of countenance, an interesting stoop in the shoulders, and a suggestive cough, he was regarded as a close student; "A man who works very hard at his sermons; one of the ripest scholars of the country, sir, I assure you;" and a dozen colleges, as unknown to the great world of influence as himself, contended for the honor of making him a doctor of divinity. Our theology has been affected by this state of things. Views of God are notoriously influenced by the state of the health. A dyspeptic sermon is as easily detected as a heavy horse. Our thoughts, our conceptions, our imaginations, are largely shaped and colored by our physical conditions. A sick man sees God through sickly conditions of mind; a starving man, through fantastic visions; a man depressed in spirits, as a person with dim sight sees a star, shorn of its beams. No correct theology could ever come out of convents. The Bible, from beginning to end, is the work of outdoor men. Moses, from the time when his parents

put him on the waters in the wicker-boat to the time when he passed from the crest of a mountain into heaven, was a child of Nature. Joshua, David, the twelve disciples, Christ himself, all were outdoor men. Adam lived principally in the country; and John saw heaven in vision while camping out on the Isle of Patmos. God never chose a diseased organization to be a channel of communication with the race. Those who were to be his interpreters to mankind have always been stout, healthy men; men of toil; men who lived simply, in accordance with the great law of Nature. The reason is not hidden from us. As the lenses of a telescope must be smooth, free from irregularities, properly shaped, and undimmed by moisture, that it may yield a true view of star and sun: so the mind that would truly reflect God must be in the highest possible condition. A great many men have thought they saw God, when, in fact, they saw nothing but the fancies of a diseased organization deified.

There are scores of men in the pulpits of New England personally known to me, and hundreds of others unknown to me, upon the continuance, I will not say of whose life, but upon the continuance of whose health, vast interests depend. I pray you to note that it is not the presence of a desire to be useful, but of an ability to give that desire practical expression, which makes these men useful to God and man. Never was there a time when the great Captain needed so many soldiers at the front, and so few in the hospital, as now. Never was there a time when his

followers should so closely attend to the economy of moral forces as to-day. The churches cannot afford to lose their pastors at fifty-six: they cannot afford to have them lose half their powers at forty-five. There is a vast amount of work in these vineyards that young men can never do. Youth has its energies, its facilities of expression, its efficient enthusiasms; but, on the other hand, there is a wisdom, a sagacity, a consecration, an influence, which can come only with years. A ministry composed over-largely of young men, must, in the very nature of things, lack certain needed elements of power required by the Master. Every soldier of Christ should grow gray in the blessed service, and die at last on the picket-line. I know what it is to stand by a coffin in which lay half the intellectual force of a neighborhood, cut off forever in premature death; I know what it is to bury a man around whom the interests of a church and community were twined as vines around a trellis; and, when the man went down, he was literally buried beneath the wreck and ruins of what in life he had loved and fostered. Above such graves, and beside such coffins, I have stood with a weight upon my spirits that required my utmost fortitude to sustain. And I believe that many pastors in this and other cities, and all up and down through the country, are being hurried, by the dire conditions of their pastoral service, to just such coffins and just such graves.

If you say, "Why do they overwork?" I respond, They cannot do otherwise. This is the way it works. A good friend, perhaps a dozen of you, having con-

stituted yourselves a committee of visitation, and prompted by your friendship, come to me, and say, "Mr. Murray, you are working too hard: you must hold up." Well, I hold up. I sleep more, and think less, and, as the result, come to the desk on the next sabbath with a sermon less carefully put together, less accurate in analysis, poorer in expression. In brief, it is unmistakably below my average. You are aghast. Perhaps you have brought a friend to hear me. You half apologize to him, and say, "That is the poorest sermon I ever heard Mr. Murray preach." Every one says so. The next sabbath and the next bring the same experience; and you begin to shake your heads, and say in whispers one to another, "Well, well, this is pretty poor preaching our pastor is giving us lately; isn't it? I tell you what, it won't do." I tell you that Americans are pitiless in their criticisms of public men. They detect instantly, and resent as an imposition, any departure from the line of average excellence. The archer that misses the target three times in succession can never shoot in respectable company again. Boston forgives any thing sooner than intellectual slovenliness.

We stand upon the threshold of summer. The pavements begin to burn with heat, and the gutters to assault the nose with noisome smells. We are approaching that season when terror walketh by night, and pestilence wasteth at noonday. I exhort all of you who can to get out of the city. Your counting-rooms will soon be like ovens, and your streets like furnaces. Accommodate your business to the neces-

sities of your condition. Money is not the only object of life. Walk leisurely ; think leisurely. The engincer puts on the brakes, and slows up, when the boxes begin to smoke. He says, " Life is worth more than the time-table. I will land every passenger safely at the dépôt if I am an hour behind the running-time." You applaud him ; and yet some of you are making preparations to run your energies at full pressure the summer through. Tested by the lowest standard of success, you are in error. The man whose brain is hot, whose blood is fevered, whose stomach is soured and weakly, is the man who will blunder in his calculation. If I were in business, I would never have any but healthy men for partners. I would not trust my fortune to the judgment of a person who could not eat with a relish, and sleep soundly. Dyspeptic men are worthless in a business-concern, save as ornaments ; and they are rather questionable ornaments ! You will all make more money in eleven months, if you will take one for rest, than by keeping steadily at work during the entire twelve. I pray you, therefore, friends, take each of you, this year, a vacation. Go to the village where you were born, to the old ancestral farm where you toiled when young ; revive the sweet and sacred memories of your earlier days ; and, standing at the very point where your aspirations and efforts began, recall the mercies of God to you during all the years of your life since. Go to the sea-shore, to the mountains, to the wilderness ; go anywhere where you can forget your cares and cast aside your burdens. Eat, sleep, and play like boys.

Let the old, old nurse, Nature, — the one mother of us all, who never scolded us when we stole her cherries, never upbraided us when we waded her fish-pools and poached on her preserves; the dear old mother that never sickens and never dies, — take you to her bosom again; and you will return to the city happier and healthier for the embrace.

Ah me, how life grinds the grit into us! how like a vampire it sucks the blood out of our veins! and, instead of standing in beauty and vigor at sixty, we lean heavily, with wrinkled hands and colorless faces, upon the staff. Will there be no let-up to this constant and fearful strain on heart and brain to which all Americans are now subject? Must we all die before our time? Must compliance with the conditions of success in business and professional life, in our country, always mean slow suicide? I submit, friends, that, sooner or later, there must be a change. Flesh and blood cannot endure it. As one standing in the very centre of the current, barely able to keep his feet by reason of the pressure, I lift my voice in protest against the custom of the times. Speaking for the clergy, I speak for thousands of overworked men. Ambitious, zealous, consecrated, — some of them too poor, others too proud, to stop, — they are being pressed by the customs of the age beyond endurance. An unreasonable expectation is goading them to retirement or the grave. The public demand that the clergyman must be a scholar, and refuse him the leisure and appliances on which scholarship can alone thrive. He must be a philosopher without the

seclusion that philosophy loves. He must match the best orators of the lyceum, and yet set the result of four days' labor over against the result of four months of careful preparation. To even approximate this, he must be a physical and mental athlete. Perfection in all the conditions of success can alone insure it. I insist that the churches shall bear in mind that their pastors have bodies; that they are subject to all the conditions of physical and mental exhaustion; and that, by generous and selfish considerations alike, they are urged to provide them with every facility needed to keep them strong and robust.

And now, my people, — mine by the election of your preference, by the bestowment of your love, by the blessed exchange of sympathies, and the compact of a most glorious hope, — let me, before I depart from you for a season, thank you for the generous provisions you have made, since my first coming among you, for my health and happiness. You have made me rich in facilities of culture; you have fenced me from the annoyances of a too-limited support; you have made my cup to run over. Your generosity has constrained me to be generous. I have been like a fountain, that holds and yields forth only what is poured into it. We know not what shall be; but the past can never be taken from us: it will remain in memory like a great sea when it reveals its vast expanse beneath the full-orbed moon, and the murmur of its motion rises like a ceaseless psalm. It shall be heard in recollection until that hour when we go

down and stand upon the shore of a wider sea, and launch our barks upon it, and sail forth upon its waters until we reach the farther marge, where we will land, and, to the music of a grander psalm, build our everlasting mansions.

SABBATH MORNING, SEPT. 3, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—PERSONAL RELATION OF CHRISTIANS TO CHRIST.

“CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.”—Col. i. 27.

THE apostle, in the context, is speaking of the relation of the Gentiles to the gospel; and, in the clause we have quoted as our text, he alludes distinctly to the relation that each individual disciple sustains to Christ. And I wish, this morning, to speak to you upon this subject, — *the personal relation of Christians to Christ*. The subject maps itself out to my mind along these three lines of thought: —

1. What the believer's relation to Christ is.
2. The necessity of it.
3. What its influences are.

I suggest, to start with, that we, as Christians, have more than an *external* relation to gospel truth, — even an *internal* one. “I do not catch your idea,” you say. Well, you shall have it, then, illustrated. We have an external relation to every truth known to the mind. Every truth of astronomy, of science, of art, of government, that is known to us, has, by the fact of its being known, a certain relation to us. Our

knowledge has connected us with it; made it, in a certain sense, ours. Thus knowledge unites me to all that my mind apprehends. There is a relation between it and myself such as did not exist previous to my apprehension of it. This is what I call the external relation a man may sustain to truth, — the relation of knowledge, of intellectual apprehension, of mental discernment. Such is the relation which thousands have to the truth of Scripture. Intellectually they believe it. They have a connection with Christianity, and yet are not Christians. They take the Bible very much as the ice takes the sun. They give it a surface-reception: they take it *upon* themselves, not *into* themselves. But the Christian takes the truth as it is in Christ, not as the ice, but as the earth, takes the sun, — *into* himself. His connection with it is not an external, but an *internal*, a *responsive* connection. When the sun comes creeping up the eastern sky in winter, how coldly he is received! The earth gives no greeting; makes no response as he approaches. His beams can send no thrill along the ice; can start no pulsation amid the snow; can quicken no energy in the leafless trees; can bring no flush to the face of the sky. He shines in vain, because his rays elicit no response, quicken no germinant power. And yet the ice and snow and trees and sky have a relation to the sun, even in midwinter; but it is not a warm, lively relation, but a cold and lifeless one, — an external relation only. So it is with many touching gospel truth. It shines upon them; but it stirs no response in their hearts: it sheds itself down upon them; but

they give nothing back to it: it brings them out of darkness, even as the sun brings the ice out of the gloom of night; but they keep their fixed, frozen, insensible state still. Their relation to it is a mere external, unsympathetic, accidental relation. But consider the sun when he comes wheeling his way back from the south in the glad spring-season. How the earth hails him each morning with a greeting warmer and sweeter at each repetition! The ice repents of its coldness, and weeps its iciness away; the snow hurries along in rivulets, as if glad to lose its own life in ministering to others; the trees lose their rigidity, and no longer resist the breezes, but yield coquettishly to them: every thing seems compliant. And how powerful the sun is! How the earth-pulses beat at his coming! How the ground thrills and heaves with up-pushing growth! How the grasses multiply themselves! and the flowers — how they bud and blossom! The leaves thicken along the landscape, and the earth hails the sun in its wealth of overflowing life. It is true, the earth would be nothing without the sun: but how it glorifies him! how sweetly it responds to his solicitation! and how it pays him back for all his ministrations to it! Its relation to him, you see, friends, is far other than it was in winter. It is now an internal, a vital, a responsive relation, — a relation powerful in its effects, and beautiful in its results. And so, when Christ comes up in all the glory and warmth of his love, and stands over a man, and in a thousand convictions and ten thousand promptings sheds himself down upon

him, and the man opens his nature to him, and receives him, he is quickened in all the forces of his nature. He begins to flower out morally, and be clothed upon in beauty. His relation to Christ is no longer an external one; it is no longer inefficient: it is an internal, a vital, and a vitalizing relation. He does more than apprehend truth: he loves it. Heart, hand, eye, every sense and faculty, are capable of new and happy sensations. Christ is no longer afar off, a being to discuss and speculate about: he is in him as the heaven is in the loaf, — a power whose workings are felt, and whose effects are seen.

There, friends, all of you, even the youngest, must understand the difference between having an external and an internal relation to truth, especially the truth which is in Jesus. The distinction is a very broad one. The query springs to my lips, and I put it to you in the candor of sympathy, Which of the two relations do you personally sustain to your Saviour? Is he any thing more to you than a being whom your intellect accepts? Is he dear to you as one deserving your love, both from what he is in himself, and also from what he has done for you? Have you received him into your heart as one to be treasured and kept? as one from whom you cannot be separated unless you die? Does your imagination picture him warmly, or coldly? Do you see him as a being afar off, dim, unsubstantial, ghostly? or as one verily with you, whose face you can see, whose hand you can take, and upon whose bosom you can lean? Ah me! there was a time when Christ was *lored*; when the faith

of the Church had some warmth and glow in it; when creeds and doctrines were valued only as helps to come to and take hold of the person of the Lord; when men and women died for him as the loyal have died for an absent but beloved king: but we have taken the passion out of religion by making it mean adherence to a set of dogmas, rather than what it should mean, — adherence to the blessed Person. Sin is counted nothing but breaking certain rules which cannot feel the severance; whereas sin is most ugly in us, because, if I may so speak, it breaks the heart of Christ. It is a personal insult, and gives a personal wound, to Him who died for us, and hurts him like a stab. And this is what is meant, as I conceive, when the Scriptures speak of some who “crucify Christ afresh.” For you should remember that he is a conscious and sensitive being. He observes our conduct daily. He is easily “grieved in his heart.” He is not so superior as to be unaffected by your treatment. He is your Elder Brother.

My hearer, listen to me. I seek with more than ordinary earnestness to win you over to this view of regarding your Saviour, because from it alone, as I think, can you receive that strength and consolation, which more than once, in the days ahead of you, you will need. The truth I am expanding and seeking to inculcate is a generic one. It is not a dogma: it is a principle. This is my position, — that an intimate, internal, loving, and vital relation must always be a personal one. You cannot love a creed, a confession of faith, a philosophy, a text of Scripture, or

all these put together into an institution or a school, any more than you can love a shade of color or a sound in the air. Love is given only to a living, personal being. Recall the sweetest passage of your life, — that for which you would die sooner than surrender the memory of it ; an hour of revelation which opened up your nature to your own eyes, and made you for the first time know yourself ; a moment of swift recognition of a want unfelt before, of a fulness never till then supplied, — recall, I say, the noblest friendship you have ever felt, the deepest, holiest love you have ever known, and tell me, if, in the centre of the recollection, there is not a face, even as a picture is within the borders of a frame, — a face that is never hidden, a voice that is never hushed, a form that is never absent. Have you met any thing in all your past like this ? If so, can you disconnect the memory from the person of whom the recollection is a part, even as the halo is a part of the saintly face it enshrines ? Can you say, “ I loved his virtue, his charity, his patience, his talents ” ? No : your heart gives the lie to your analysis, and, true to its instincts, murmurs, “ I only know that I loved the man.” And so, the world over, the relation of love is a personal relation. An element, a characteristic, cannot awaken a passion. “ If ye *love me*,” said Christ, “ ye will keep my words.” Nobler, purer, better than all he published or revealed was himself.

It is only when thus regarded that Christianity has any self-sacrificing element in it. But love is full of service, full of self-denial, for the object of its affec-

tion. We all know from experience what a mother's love is, — the toils, the labors, the patience, that it represents. But there is a love greater than this even, equal in service, deeper in its fervor; and what it will not dare, what it will not endure, the Author of it alone knows. Let two be united by it, each finding in the other the answer of their best prayer, the supply of their deepest social, mental, and spiritual need; each fitted to the other like a noble word to a sweet note, and hence a mutual delight. Such a love is invincible against every combination of a changeful life: it will give up home, parents, country, and friends; it will accept poverty with gladness, and regard happiness cheap purchased at such a price; it will risk life itself in order to keep the integrity of its faithfulness, and die rather than forego its adherence. This is not poetry; at least, if it is, it is the poetry, not of fiction, but of real life. The old romance of human nature has not wholly died out; and its starry faith has not yet shaded its resplendent orb. Love, to-day, is as full of self-surrender, of service, of patience which hungers and speaks not, which suffers and makes no sound, as it ever was; yea, fuller.

It is in vain, friends, for men to strive to build up a religion that has not as its centre, and source of inspiration, some person to love. This is the pivot around which all faith, all service, all hope, circle and swing with an ever-widening circumference, — a circumference which sweeps tribe after tribe, race after race, and soul after soul, within the circle of its

charmed line. What would Papacy be without its pope? what Mahometanism without its prophet? what Christianity without the Christ? Tenets, dogmas, creeds, speculations, and theories, — these make, indeed, the form and outline of a sun: but, alas! they cannot supply it with beams; they cannot give to it that light which quickens, and that warmth which brings the germinant forces of holiness forward. These make a theologian, a philosopher, a reformer; but they cannot make a Christian or a saint.

My people, do any of you know a person for whom and with whom you are willing to bear shame? Do you know of one whom you honor and reverence so much, that to hear him spoken lightly of and reviled is a greater pain than to be reviled yourself? If you know of such a person, your love is indeed great, and you supply me with an illustration. Take away that dear one's name, and in its place write "Jesus." Do you know of one whose presence is better than wealth? whose presence would make a desert like a bower, and the solitude of a wilderness cheerful? — one so dear to you, that proximity means happiness, and separation misery? in respect to whom, so much do you love him, you can, without exaggeration, say, "With him I have all, without him I have nothing"? If such a one you know, then him also do you indeed love with a love as bright and everlasting as the stars. Take away his name, and write in its stead "My Saviour." Or once more let me inquire, Do you know of one (I know not who can follow me in this; for it is a deed so rare and saintly, that, being done, it lives

with the immortality of letters), — do you know of one, I say, for whom you could die? Do you know of one so generous, so grand, so dear, that you would stand at the door of his dungeon, your mouth filled with only one prayer, — to take his place, or at least to share his doom? Then have you touched the height of heroic devotion; for He toward whom I ask you to feel like this has said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.” Do you see what such a love for Christ begets? Note as I enumerate a few only of the results. I mention, first, *service*; second, great grief in view of any sin, because offensive to him; third, *joy*. Such a love revels and delights; it is full of song and exultation; it deems its lot the happiest possible, and is never done wondering at its good fortune. Here, then, springing out of this love for a personal Christ, are these three results, — work for Christ, repentance for sin as done against Christ, and joy in Christ.

Now, friends, you see that Christ is not in us by reason of our having accepted a certain set of formulated ideas, but by reason of *a change which has come over our feelings towards him*. It is not because you have believed a given number of doctrines that you are a Christian, but because you have established, through faith, a *personal relation* with Christ himself. All our views of Christ, all doctrines that are worth knowing, spring out of this felt personal relation to the Saviour, as flowers out of an upheaved and shapely mound in which they were planted. What you should cultivate, therefore, is not knowledge of

his doctrines so much as a closer intimacy in your heart with him. It is not the truth which he published that you are to have in you so much as Him who is the very author of truth. Your obligation as Christians springs, not from your relation to the covenant of this church, but from your relation with Him with whom you have covenanted. It is not the law you are to obey, but the law-maker; and by him, and not by it, are you at last to be judged. Through type and symbol, through prophecy and revelation, through commandment and doctrine, your eye should ceaselessly seek to find the person of your Saviour. It is not the altar, but the priest that ministers at it, and gives to it its sanctity; it is not the throne, but the king upon it; it is not the doctrine of the atonement, but the blessed Being that made it by his own sufferings and death, — that should receive your reverence, your homage, and your love. O men and women without a Saviour! I seek not to convert you to any set of doctrines this morning; I seek not to make you read this text or that as I read it: I only seek to make you feel to-day that you have a friend in heaven; I only crave that you might feel what I have felt when tempted, when oppressed, when set upon by troubles not a few, — that One there is who saw me, who strengthened me, and who would redeem me in my hour of death. Men care little about doctrines when they come to die. Some hand to clasp, some voice to cheer, some look of love to soothe, some faithful breast on which to lie, — for this humanity cries in the sharp agony. Guide-books are good

for cities ; but when you thread the wilderness, or climb the dizzy height where hangs the poised avalanche which the stroke of an alpenstock can start from its precarious balance, then man needs more than a guide-book : he needs a guide. O wanderers in life's wilderness ! O climbers along crags which beetle over chasms unmeasurable ! have you a guide ? You will go down to your homes and the places of your abode, and life will claim you in its duties, and my words will be forgotten. I know the lot of speaking, and the inevitable fortune of utterance. Against the swift multitude of your thoughts and your diversions to-morrow my words will be like feathers blown out of sight by the strong winds. You will remember where you heard them, and no more ; perchance not even this. Be it so. I build my hope on this, — that some impression has been made which will enter among and become a part of the needed impressions of your life ; some seed-thought planted, which, hidden now, will find the light, and bud and blossom on some future day.

This personal relation to Christ produces in us a certain result of which the text makes mention, — *hope*. Love is always hopeful : its faith in itself makes it so. In its own thought it is immortal ; and hence the hope of immortality is in it. It uses this world if permitted, but builds the foundation of its permanent happiness in the world to come. In this hope it is content to endure all things here, confident that it shall have all things in the hereafter. Its face is like that of Evangeline, — patient, wistful, with a

look that is directed upward and beyond. Memory to it is sweet; but it does not live in remembrance. Possession is precious; but the present never bounds the line of its aspiration. Its musings, its aspirations, its dreams, are of a wider, a fuller, and an endless future. This is true of love in its best estate and happiest earthly condition. What must it be, then, when cramped, when separated from the object of its desire, when denied every thing but the joy of its own faithfulness? What, then, can it find in the past but emptiness? what in the present but deprivation? How glorious and dear the future is to it now! what beautiful possibilities are in it! what divine certainties of union and life lie ahead! It is like a bird overtaken by night when far from its mate and nest. It longs for the morning, for the ecstasy of the swift passage, and the meeting in the warm sunshine. Some of you, at least, know the depth of the truth of these words of Christ, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;" and you know how the heart aches, and how strong the longing within your bosom is, at times, to go hence, and be where your desires elect.

"But no one has ever taught me to love Christ so," you say. "It seems queer to hear you talk as if he is a real being, — a being to be loved, and longed for as for some dear, absent, earthly friend. I do not understand it." I understand it, my hearer. You have been taught to believe in creeds and doctrines more than in him the personal Saviour. The bulk of your religious instruction has been of what he said

and did when visible to the senses of men on the earth. You have been instructed in the knowledge of words ; made wise in definition, and analysis of terms and phrases. You have been made to feel that your hope of heaven depends upon your acceptance of a set of published ideas, and not upon your personal relation to God through Christ. The articles of faith have been presented to you as if a certain degree of competence in confession brings you up to the level of the needed holiness ; and the result is (I do not say that it has been reached intelligently by you, or forwarded in you designedly by others), — the result is, I say, that Christ, in his personal relation to you as a living, loving being, has been pushed almost out of sight, and made to seem unreal, fictitious, and imaginary. Your works have been in the form of a service prompted by a sense of duty, and not in the form of an offering impelled by love. Sin has been only the transgression of a rule, and not an offence put upon God ; and your joy is found in the number of things done or left undone, and not in the growing consciousness that you are accepted of Him whom your soul loveth. The whole drift of the instruction you have received has been to make you a theologian, and not a saint ; and this, I believe, is, to a large extent, true of the entire modern Church. It is unconsciously substituting knowledge for piety, and striving to feel an impossible love for an impossible Christ ; for if religion does not mean a personal relation to a personal being, then love is impossible.

Suffer one other suggestion. A hope that is built

on acceptance of the truth, on degrees of knowledge and obedience, on sincerity of purpose or effort, and not on the merit and intercessions of a personal Redeemer, is, and must be, a timid and inconstant feeling. There is a reason why ignorant Christians are always hopeful. It is not because they have less knowledge, but because, having less, their faith is less diverted from its proper and sublime object. They literally know nothing but "Jesus, and him crucified;" and on him they rely with an unquestioning faith. He is their all-in-all: he, and he alone, is their hope of glory. And what a hope theirs is! I have seen such die. They were poor, unlettered, destitute of ideas; they had had no traffic in the great commerce of the world's thought; it were easy for wit to mock them, and for culture to pity their ignorance: but they died as the sun comes out of an eclipse, their natures revealing great glory as they moved from behind the shadow of their mortality. No crying out, no shrinking back as from an untried fate, no knitting up of courage as for a mighty effort, no grasping of mortal hands as if for help, no swift and anxious dialogue with the onlooking pastor, no doubt and trembling when they came to die; but with hands folded for rest, with eyes uplifted to heaven and full of joy, with countenances lighted as is the face when it answereth to the face of a friend, with a sigh like the last long breath of weariness passing into sleep, they gently breathed their lives out in the arms of Jesus. He was no myth to them. They saw him, not through form and cere-

mony, through type and symbol, through theologic treatise and verbal memorizing of the catechism: they saw him as the patient sees the physician; as the lamb sees the Eastern shepherd when it lies in the folds of his vestment: they saw him as the uplifted eye of love sees the face of answering love above it; and seeing this, doubt being unknown in the perfection of their faith, fear being cast out by the perfectness of their love, they closed their eyes as flowers close at the setting of the sun, and gently "fell on sleep."

And now, you who have followed me with patience, only dimly catching at the thought, perhaps, — for I have found it impossible to bring my thought out, and make the division-line of its varied shadings distinct and true, — you who have dimly caught, I say, at what I meant, and seen the bright, glad world of faith and love which I have not revealed, but only suggested, — a world of love for the most lovely, of faith in the most faithful, of joy in Him who was once most sorrowful, but is now most blessed, — make your relation to the Saviour a *personal* one. Let him, in all your thought, be near and dear to you. You know what he expects. Such love as his for you always expects much. If you love father or mother more than him, you are not worthy of him. Remember that love has but one line or rule in giving: it is that by which it receives. And nobler, purer, sweeter (I will not say more lasting, for both shall live forever), but tenderer and more fervid, than love of father and mother, has been, and is, Christ's

love for you. Are you sick? — his eyes shall keep their watching when the mother's, through weariness, close in sleep. Are you shut out from counsel? — go to a love that respects all human secrets, and a wisdom competent to guide. Are you heavy-hearted, weighed down, oppressed? — “Come unto me,” he says, “and I will give you rest.” Have you found your ignorance by erring, and your weakness by many a fall? — go to Him who knows your frame, and remembers that you are dust. Have you sinned? — go to a mercy whose forgiveness a thief receives, and a murderer cannot exhaust. If, on the other hand, you are happy; if any thing sweet and fragrant has come to you; if your soul has been enriched by what man could not give; if you have any thing so precious to you, that it connects both worlds, puts one in communication with the other, and makes both blessed, — then take it as coming direct from Him, warm and sweet with the recent touch of his all-bestowing palm. Oh that the glory and warmth of the orient might be seen and felt in our western sky! Oh that the majesty of the palm, — emblem of stateliness in growth, and of victory when strewn, — and the wealth of the pomegranate, and the rich beauty of the Eastern lilies, might be again suggested to her poets when they sing of the Church! How shall we call her more the Bride of Christ, when so much of speculation, and so little of love, is in her bosom? When will the old rich glow come back to her features, the full pulse to her veins, and all that life of personal affection for her Lord which filled her mouth with songs

when at her work, and made her faithfulness unto death a wonder to those that could not comprehend, and hated the love that made infidelity impossible, and martyrdom a joy? I know not; but this I know, that this will never be until the *personal* relation between each disciple and Christ be taught, felt, and ardently believed.

O Love! thy feet are beautiful upon the mountains and in the highways of human life. Thy face is lovely on the throne, and not less lovely at the peasant's humble door. A house with thee becomes a home; and a dungeon, if thou art in it, is not utterly desolate. Thy worth is known by those who have thee; and by those who have thee not art thou esteemed. Beautiful art thou at the marriage-feast, with mirth and laughter, the voluptuous swell of music, and in rooms whose slumberous air is heavy with the scent of orange-flowers; beautiful, also, art thou in chambers of happy birth, when motherhood is born with the first-born's breath, and she who giveth birth is born again; beautiful, too, as we can testify, when on thy knees beside the dying-couch, with clasped hands and flooded eyes, thou givest thy farewell kiss to lips that nevermore will give the answering kiss this side of heaven: but never art thou so much thyself, never so gracious, so like thy Father, as when thou dost unite in an eternal bond the heart of sinful man unto his God. Come then, to all this people, in thy most beautiful shape, clothed like a vestal, and supremely pure; breathe out thy breath upon us; quicken each holy sense; create in us the

deathless yearning, the undying faith, the changeless hope: for by thy power alone will Christ, revealed, experienced, as love by love, be formed in us, "the hope of glory."

SABBATH MORNING, SEPT. 10, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT. — DEATH A GAIN.

“TO DIE IS GAIN.” — Phil. i. 21.

AS a strain of music, mellowed by distance and the moist evening-air in summer through which it passes, and which it fills until the darkness beats with the melody, dies out, and is not heard for a while, but anon is heard again, as one sees a ship far off at sea, — a little speck of sound, which comes swiftly on and enlarges itself until it moves along the air in majestic resonance; so has it been with me touching this theme, — the gain of dying. It came to me like music, grave, solemn, and sweet, with here and there a lively, quick-running, exultant tone, as when the player in the midst of some majestic movement of the lower chords flashes his hand along the higher keys. It came, and died away; and I have waited vainly until now to hear the dying in some rising strain. At last it comes. I catch the well-known chord again, — the same sublime, upheaving movement of thought, of hope, of impulse: and as the eagle about to soar seeks and finds and puts himself upon a column of

uplifting air, and is by its upheaving power borne up and up until he finds the height he had in mind at starting, the unruffled calm of upper heaven, and the majestic, unclouded orb; so I, a thing of flesh, whose home is amid shadows, and not above the fog, seek now this mighty, uplifting theme, and put my mind upon it, asking only that it may lift me to the upper realm of faith, whose deep tranquillity is unfretted by currents of earthly thought, and filled forever with the light of the glory of the Lord.

I am to speak of the social gain of dying. My discourse is based upon this thought, — that as a social being, as one born to love and be loved, as one fond of companionship and intercourse with his kind, man will not lose, but gain, by the experience called death. Socially he will be better conditioned out of his present body than he is in it.

To me, death as an event has a twofold significance. For years, now, I have especially associated two ideas with it. The first of these is this: It will enlarge the locality of my life. I am, as a family, compelled to live in too small a house. I shall be glad when I can move out of it and have more room. Death will give me this opportunity. It will pass me to a nobler residence. Beyond the grave I shall not be cramped. My life will not be centred to one spot. I shall get that wisdom which comes from wide journeyings, and intermingling with many. This will be a gain.

The other thought is this: Death will be the signal of my passing from a lower to a higher stage of exer-

cise and development. Mortality has its motives ; but they are not such as immortality will have. Earth has its duties ; but they are tame, indeed, beside the ministries which heaven imposes. The character of our work affects us, and man is often small because his labor is ignoble : but, when death comes, we shall be dignified with nobler service ; we shall be developed along a higher range of effort ; we shall all have the bearing and vesture of princes when we serve in the King's house.

If you say, "How know you this? the future is unknown," I reply, The future is, in truth, unknown, and hence largely uncertain ; but that there is a realm peopled with life ahead of us, we feel and are assured. Nor are its laws and privileges entirely hidden. That it is populous, we know ; for multitudes were there before the birth of man, and multitudes are daily passing into it. The names of all the living are found among the dead. Each household is represented. They go singly, in couples, in groups, in circles, in clouds, like birds that move on separately in calm, and anon are blown along in crowds by the great winds. There is not a spot upon the earth which has not been the starting-point for some upward-going spirit. In the lone valley, beneath the shade of cypress, the weary and bewildered hunter has lain him down and slept ; and, leaving there his body on the mosses, himself did journey up out of the fog, and make his neighborhood amid the everlasting stars. From the surf-beaten beach and the white terror of underlying reefs, from battle-fields where

life was flung away as if it had no value, from palace-couch and cottage-bed, from study and street, from every locality beneath that rolling sun, men have gone up to God. And all these — the strong, the passionate, the loving — took all their powers and feelings with them. Upon the smaller the larger life was on the instant grafted. They did find their growth “in the twinkling of an eye.” They were all changed as the bud is changed when it blossoms, as the sun is changed when it sails out from behind the veil of the eclipse. There was no lapse of power, no interruption of the faculties, no cessation of thought, no ebb to the majestic current of their lives, in death. We touch the lowest tide-mark in dying; and from that point our lives know only an eternal flood. They went, not shorn, meagre, unattended, but circled round about and braced with faculties and powers. They took their friendships with them, even as we, when journeying to foreign parts, take ours with us, and find they thrive even in absence. They took their loves into that other world, even as the sun takes all his beams at setting with him into another hemisphere. They took their strength of feeling with them, their yearning and their craving, their prayer for fulness, — that life-long prayer rising up from out our felt emptiness; the one prayer that God has never answered, and may not until we stand in his actual presence, behold him as a parted child his regained father, and so are filled. They took, in brief, all that in birth he gave them, and stood before Him who made them *as* he made them, — full men and women.

To me the spirit-world is tangible. It is not peopled with ghosts and spectres, shadows and outlines of being, but with persons and forms palpable to the apprehension. Its multitudes are veritable, its society natural, its language audible, its companionships real, its loves distinct, its activities energetic, its life intelligent, its glory discernible : its union is not that of sameness, but of variety brought into moral harmony by the great law of love, like notes, which, in themselves distinct and different, make, when combined, sweet music. Death will not level and annul those countless differences of mind and heart which make us individual here. Heaven, in all the mode and manner of expression, will abound with personality. There will be choice and preference and degrees of affinity there. Each intellect will keep its natural bias, each heart its elections. Groups there will be, and circles ; faces, known and unknown, will pass us ; acquaintance will thrive on intercourse, and love deepen with knowledge ; and the great underlying laws of mind and heart prevail and dominate as they do here, save in this, — that sin, and all the repellence and antagonisms that it breeds, will be unknown, and holiness supply in perfect measure the opportunity and bond of brotherhood.

My friends, I speak, not out of Scripture, but out of reason and hope, in this ; and yet it may not be amiss should thought be quickened in you, and your eyes be made somewhat familiar, by gazing through even an imperfect medium, with that unvisited land toward which the passing of each day, each hour, each

moment even, is surely bringing us. There should be, there must be, some settled faith in us upon this subject, else who could bear the wrench of separation and the sorrows of life? I shall lie down, I know, in death; but my powers will not decay: for if these perish, then do I perish; for they are of me, and without them I am not. My body shall know corruption. It shall become familiar with the changes of the elements of which it is. It shall go back and mingle with its native dust. It shall float upon the wind, a part of it. It shall take new forms, and feel the heat of summer and the touch of frost. It shall dissolve, and be not, save as it lives in the changeful round and passages of the material world. But I shall never change save with the changes of growth, — of addition and expansion. Within me is what the dust could never make, the dust can never claim, — hope, feeling, impulse, and the strong onswEEPing power of thought which channels the great universe of mind with the movement of an inexhaustible and ever-increasing force. This will flow on forever, when worlds have perished, and the races that peopled them, in their material forms, have passed away. This something in me which makes me nobler than the brute; which gives me seat and rank in the great parliament ruled by the highest life; which makes my body but an accident, and my stay on earth but as a night which a traveller passes at an inn, — this shall never lie down, I say, with the material form it now ennobleS by its indwelling; but it shall stand erect, imperishable, a marvel of dignity, like that old statue which faced

with lofty and imperturbable mien the east, and from whose lips issued music with the rising of every sun. Years came and went, and centuries grew apace; tribes perished; cities rose and fell; even empires, whose boast was their duration, faded: but still the statue stood, the same look of chiselled majesty upon its face, the same serenity of gaze, and the same audible sweetness greeting each dawn through its untouched, unshrivelled, everlasting lips.

And if I change not, but keep the integrity of my being, what shall I lose? what shall be riven from me in death? Nothing! I shall be clothed upon, not stripped. Enlargement and expansion, not extraction and diminution, will come to me. And the social structure of heaven, as I conceive, so far as it relates to man, has for its basis the same powers and capacities, the same aptitudes and affinities, as society has here. Indeed, I do not picture the next life so vastly unlike the present as many seem to do. The good need not, and can only, change by the changes of growth. We shall have the same God to adore, the same Saviour to praise, and the same Spirit to quicken us, as here. Our sphere of service will be nobler, our powers larger, our loves deeper and holier, the best within us ever in ascendancy; but in what else shall the good be different? All that made life sweet, all that made intercourse delightful, all that adorned us and added grace and ornament to us, will there continue. The change will be in the betterment of our condition, in the improvement of our circumstances, in the increased occasions and opportunities

of our lives, rather than through any revolution in ourselves. When I go hence, therefore, I shall take all that is dear and precious with me. I shall not go forth alone, but girt about with friends. On one side Memory will walk, her sensitive face alive with recollected mercies; on the other, Hope will precede me, her look prophetic of fulness, like the countenance of morning when it feels the coming of day. When we strike our tents, friends, we shall take all our household gods with us. At death we do not begin to live a new life, but the old one improved upon, enlarged, ennobled. The tune will be on the same key; but the volume will be fuller, richer, and the melody sweeter.

I know to whom I am speaking when I say this: I am speaking to men and women who have lived and suffered, rejoiced and mourned. I know also to what I am speaking: I am speaking to that best part of you, seldom, if ever, shown to the world, but held up freely in the secret of your souls before God; to that in you which the earth alone could never elicit, and, if it had elicited, would never satisfy. You have not lived thoughtlessly. There are seas that ships cannot sail with whole canvas; and there are passages in life from which we come forth not as we entered into them. The years back of us are full of voices eloquent and pathetic. You who have lived long have stood over the grave of many an early dream. Success, when it came, was not what you thought it would be; and even that has often been denied you. You have eaten and slept with disappointment. You have watched by the

couch of many a hope, and seen it fail and die. You have buried many a bright expectation, and laid the memorial-wreath over many a joy. When, alone by yourselves at times, you close your eyes and think, these memories become oppressive. Withered garlands are there, and broken rings, and vases once fragrant with flowers, and the white faces of those that sleep. It is hard to say farewell to a hope that has cheered us; to unloose the clasp of what seemed an undying friendship; to see a love sail away, and sink its white sails in the sea, regardless of our outstretched hands, and white, surf-beaten face. Yet most of you, I suppose, at one or another time of your life, have stood on that beach, and waded far out into its deep sounding waves, and wrung your hands at parting with what would nevermore come back. And yet, to such as are not crazed thereby, such partings and memories are not vain. There are things back of us, known only to Heaven, which did greatly shape our lives. There are faces, and the pressure of hands, and snatches of song, and the light of long-closed eyes, and the far-distant murmur of solemn prayer, which we do treasure choicely and reverently. There be those with faith enough to think that by and by the old faces will be seen once more, the loved voices heard anew, and all lost things will come sailing back to us, like ships, which, parted by night and the swift stroke of tempest, at morning, with sails all washed, and fairer than they went, come hurrying back to anchorage; and they wait with watching for that day, and, like some angel detained from his

companions, sit gazing with wistful eyes steadfastly upward and far ahead.

For one, I sympathize with such. I hold, not from mere sentiment and warmth of impulse, but from the reason of things, and what I know of God, that, somewhere down the future, we shall meet what we most longed for, but did miss in this present life ; and that all I prayed for purely — the answer being impossible in this state and world — will then and there be given me, and I shall put my arms around it, and have it with me as mine eternally. Then shall that knowledge which I crave, and have not ; for which I search, and do not find, — the knowledge of the First Cause, and the intricacies of human destiny — be discovered. Then shall the mysteries of Providence, which withholds where I should grant, and permits where I should deny, be unfolded. Then shall the uneven balance, which no lifting of my faith can bring to even poise, be accurately adjusted, and I shall see why the wicked prosper, and the good decrease. Then will the grim, stark mystery of sin, which many explain so glibly, but which to me, after all my pondering and praying, only looms up as the great, ugly, inexplicable *fact*, which hangs like dread eclipse upon the effulgence of universal and otherwise apparent love, be explained. Then shall I gain what I have lost, and much besides, — even what I crave, and have not, — and at last be satisfied.

No night so long as to endure forever. A dawn will come at last, and come in all the flush of gold and amber. Beyond the grave, we may not have the or

dering of our lot ; but we shall have great liberty in choosing, — even the liberty of the children of God. Eternity will bring to the good the opportunity of a fresh start. We have all blundered here more than we shall there ; for there we shall select and discard with a higher intelligence than we saw with here. Our companionship will be intuitive, like that of purity. We shall mate ourselves with whatever is most kindred to us in thought, fibre, and feeling. The laws and conditions of earthly existence, of imperfect discernment, end at the grave. When you and I, my friends, stand on the shore of that unsailed sea, we shall build us new ships : some of us will build differently than we did here, and launch them in other company. There, too, shall we meet again the loved and saintly who have gone before us, from whom we parted as love parts with love upon a beach, — with lip pressed to lip, and hands slow to unclasp. They sailed off and disappeared, and the great waters hid them from sight ; but the hearts that waved their signals back to us as they receded still beat in love for us as ours still swell with love for them : and when we, too, have taken boat, and sailed off, and crossed the sea of unknown width, whose steady level breaks not in wave or crest until it touches heaven, then curves in whiteness, and makes endless music as it falls, — then as we stood on this, and waved our parting love to them, so shall we behold them standing on the farther shore waving their welcoming love to us ; and the interrupted intercourse will be renewed, and push its lines of love and sympathy out forever. Heaven

would not be heaven to me without its faces, beginning with His who lifteth the light of his countenance upon me now day by day, and whose splendor, tempered to my eyes, will be then my daily wonder and delight down through all the grades of love to the lowliest man that lives, for whom, as for an unseen and unmet brother, I have prayed. They must all be there, I say, — all needed by my heart, as the sun needs every object on the earth to elicit its warmth; as the earth needs every ray of light to help its growth by day, and change its gloom and dread by night to splendor. That they will be there I make no doubt. Love is of God, and with him it shall live. It is the endless music of the universe, the perfume that makes the body of the atmosphere which angels breathe. The melody shall continue, and the air keep its sweet vitality. The world of spirits is populous; and we shall go into numberless companionships when we enter it. In it is the great city full of mansions built and mansions being builded. They are being fitted up and prepared ceaselessly. The city grows with the growth of God's plan of redeeming man. The space between it and earth is white with the passage of spirits passing in. They come pouring into it from the dark earth as white doves come streaming homeward when chased by tempest, their pure forms strongly marked against the black clouds. Thus it is being filled and peopled by a "great multitude that no man can number." From such beings the play and exercise of the affections cannot be separated. You cannot conceive of them as not mingling and inter-

changing their loves one for another. A language adapted to their wants, to their services, to their ever-increasing powers, will be theirs ; and themes too high for mortal thought will engage their minds. Nor will lesser and sweeter themes be wanting ; for the happiness of the children will be the joy and pride of the all-protecting Father. O friends ! will it not be gain to die, if dying will bring us to such ? Oh for the day when we shall come to some one of the many groups ; when we shall join the perfect spirits of the skies, know them, and be known of them ! What discoveries will in that hour be made ! what greetings given and received ! what sweet surprises be experienced ! for many will be there whom we did not expect to see. Heaven will not be like a strange place, but like our home from which we had been detained : for we shall see, not strangers, but old familiar faces ; and faces never by us seen before will be known instantly by us, by that law of subtile, spiritual recognition by which spirits know each other everywhere, even as they know and are known instantly of God ; and heaven will be in its sights and sounds and greetings a great home-gathering to us who enter it.

My friends, I am not tired of earthly life beyond what all men, fitted for the life to come, at times are weary of it. I love it in its uses, its labors, and its joys. Its duties give exercise to my faculties, its loves to my affections, its successes to my happiness. I am not morbid, but sense the world through a healthy body, a growing mind, and a hope as strong and bracing as a current of northern air when it bears

down upon a camp from the sides of mountains planted thickly with odorous trees. The pulse of this life is strong within me, my friends many, and my fortune beyond my merit or my expectation. I am not talking to you as a disappointed, a depressed, an unhappy man. Keeping only what I have, blessed only with my present blessings, I could stay on earth forever if it be God's will, and be content. But, in spite of all this, when my thoughts range out ahead, and canvass my future, I can but feel persuaded that the present, precious as it is, does not begin to measure the resources of blessing hidden in the heart of God for me. My present state does not permit me their full reception; does not allow the perfect disclosure of his love. I need the spiritual body, the heavenly language, the celestial sphere of action, the holy companionships, the powers and functions, the rank and dignity, the privilege and liberty, of the glorified world and state, or ever I shall know the breadth and length and depth and height of the riches of his love; and I feel persuaded, that by the very drift and movement of time I am being borne toward, and at last shall come to, something far better than the good of to-day.

I am often asked if we shall know our friends in heaven; if the old loves will abide, and the ties formed on earth endure. I cannot doubt it.* What is there in death to shock the coherence of these bonds, or sunder the cords that bind us to our loved ones? You can tell if aught there be; for you have stood and seen the gentle die. You have seen their closing eyes grow luminous with an immortal light.

You have seen the lips, that quivered to say the long farewell, part even in saying it with a heavenly smile. You could not hold them back or keep them from their rest. You lost in losing them what made life rich ; but they had come to the borders of a mighty gain, and entered in and took possession of their immortality, not, as they had thought, with shrinking, but with joy. It was not in your hearts to hinder them. You only stood and prayed, while tears rained down your face, that you might be remembered from out their mansions amid the everlasting light. You are remembered. They are like God ; and, like him, they bear you evermore in mind. Heaven never forgets. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?" We live like stars in constellation, and move on in groups. Resolve the race into its constituent parts, by nations, by tribes, by families, and you find that the universal symbol is the circle. A little cordon of clasped hands represents the whole. The race began in incompleteness, and was made perfect in two. We flock naturally, we group, we cluster ; and the higher we are carried up in development, the closer are we drawn together. When we touch the perfect love, we are inseparable. Death does not suspend the action of this organic law of life in man : never think so. Do angels stand apart, isolate each from the other ? Shall we diverge, when, like so many suns, we rise above the mountains, and the outrayings of our lives find at last a level and an endless range ? No : we shall come nigher than before ; our union then will be

the union of kindred elements; and God to all our loves will be even what the air is to music. He will receive them all into his bosom, be thrilled by them, and pass them on, he being a perfect medium forever. •

My friends, there is another and a higher gain, unmentioned as yet, which the Christian will receive in dying. It is the spiritual gain; the gain of the soul; the gain of the spirit; of those pure, strong, immortal forces of thought and observation in us which relate directly to God. Of this I cannot speak unless I claim a knowledge I do not have. The physical gain I can appreciate; the mental understand; the social, through the imagination, at least dimly conceive of: but of the gain which the soul of man receives in dying, I know, and can know, nothing. I might as well attempt to gain a knowledge of the sun by gazing at it with my unassisted eye. Its glory blinds me; its going-forth is too mighty for me. I drop my gaze perforce, and find relief in a lower range of vision. The meeting of spirit with spirit, — of all spirits with the one parental Spirit, — who can conceive of it? We know what it is when mind meets mind, when heart meets heart; and here and there two may be found whose souls have been united. They apprehend each the other's thought instinctively, as we shall apprehend the thoughts of God when fit in purity for their reception. They judge by intuitions, as we shall judge when brought in sympathetic connection with the divine nature. They mutually appropriate and possess the other, even as Jehovah

sweeps within the circle of his affection all whom he loves. Their union is not of law, nor yet of love alone: it is of essence with essence, of two lives mated for two worlds, of two intelligences joined for two spheres. A union like this — based not on name nor law nor love — shall outlive these, and lift itself above the wreck of mere temporal relations, — even as some majestic column stands above the ruins of a city shaken into fragments by an earthquake, — sole, impressive, indestructible, in heaven. So shall the soul of man be in its union with God. What rank, what dignity, what privilege and majesty, will it not bring to us! I stand in awe before the expectation. It rises on my faith as a city seen from a mountain at sunrise shines out from amid the mists, — spires and roofs of gold from out a crimson sea. So heaven seems to me. So seems the hour of meeting God. O soul! be still. Canst thou not bear the yoke one hour, and not complain? Is it not enough that thou shalt surely come at last to rest and him?

I stood with friends this summer upon a beach, after a day of storm, inhaling the cool air and the wild odors, when suddenly, upon my right hand and my left, a crimson mist arose, floated lightly upward, and formed a bow. We gazed and gazed as if we stood beneath the porch of heaven. Its either base was not a hundred feet from where we stood, the central section of its dome directly over our head. Even then, as we were gazing at its suspended beauty, a current of air came out of the west, and put its pressure upon the changing dyes; and, keeping its perfect outline, it floated

across the lake, enlarging as it went. It pushed its bases out, and lifted up its dome, as if angels were heaving underneath it, until its base extended miles, and the majestic mountain stood beneath its arch of matchless color; and there it hung, a frame of crimson dyes around the hills, while all its glory was reflected from the lake beneath. So, once again I say, shall be to me this hope of gain in dying. From a boy I dreamed of immortality, — of something larger and nobler ahead. The aspiration existed before I came to Christ. Faith in him did not beget the longing: it only revealed the mode and method of its realization. It grew upon my right hand and my left, — a mist of faith and love and deathless impulse. It formed itself even out of tears. It widened out its side, and lifted up its dome, as I advanced in years, and floated off until it swept my life within its bases, and spanned the future, arching it with radiance. And there, my friends, it hangs to-day, the hills of heaven underneath it, and the mystic sea before the throne giving back its every hue; while from out its dome, as from a far-off distance, the bells of the unseen city, seen never by the living, set in sweetest chime, send out their notes, — a hymn of praise that never ends, and gains in sweetness as it swells.

SABBATH MORNING, SEPT. 17, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—BUSINESS-LIFE: ITS USES AND DANGERS.

“NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS.”—Rom. xii. 11.

IF one would understand how wide the New Testament is in its application to human affairs, how practical and matter-of-fact in its requirements, how far removed from the realm of speculation and mere philosophizing, he has only to read this twelfth chapter of Romans. The religion of the New Testament is a religion which relates to the smallest detail of conduct. Instead of its being a religion of the emotions alone, it touches these only that it may the more surely affect the practice. Here in this chapter the inspired writer runs over the entire scale of Christian duty, touching almost every key. He seems to cover almost every possible contingency of conduct, leaving nothing in the way of direction for a good man to desire.

I have spoken to you from several of these passages already; and this morning I wish to offer certain suggestions from the words I have recited as my text: “Not slothful in business.”

The Word of God, in all its expressions, is direct against laziness. It is said in the Proverbs, that "the way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns," and that "the desire of the slothful killeth him." In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew we have the picture of, and the condemnation pronounced upon, the "wicked and slothful servant;" and here in the text is the express command, "Be not slothful."

Many reasons might be adduced to account for the strong expressions in the Bible touching this habit. There can be no doubt but that God regards laziness as a sin in itself. Indolence is one form of vice. The idle hour is the Devil's opportunity. What a splendid opportunity some people give him! Non-employment of the mind and the sympathies prevent reformation. The way to drive out wicked imaginations is, not by endeavoring to stop thinking, but by a substitution of good for evil thoughts. Nor is there any way which leads to happiness other than through the exercise of the emotions and faculties given us of God. Pleasure of all kind is found in the movement, and not stagnation, of the faculties. Thought itself is action; and to say that one is happy is to say that his sensibilities are in a state of delightful exercise.

There is this further thought which I wish to suggest to you in this connection: it is this: We are to strive by diligent attention to excel in the duties of our *particular* calling. If a bird wishes to reach a given point in the shortest possible space of time, it must not zig-zag; it must not fly in half-circles or curves, or swoop up and down: it must so aim and

balance itself, that every stroke of its wings shall project it in a straight line. Now, there are a great many men who do business in a zig-zag, eccentric kind of a way. They fly, now toward this point, now toward that; they are fickle, changeful, and intermittent; they never settle down to any one thing; they never make every nerve and faculty tell in one straight line. They are forever mixing themselves up in outside matters, ventures, speculations, and wild schemes. Now, friends, this sort of thing will not do. Such a road is too crooked, too full of pitfalls, to advance a man toward the fullest measure of success, whether you gauge success by the low or the high level of measurement. The world has advanced so far already, its industries are so wide and various, the laws that govern them are so intricate, the circumstances which dictate success are so changeful, that no one man can master them all. One branch of business is as much as one head can manage well at a time: one life is none too long to acquire the needed experience. The great vineyard of human activity is mapped out into sections; and one section is all any of you can cultivate thoroughly at a time. The age does not allow of Admirable Crichtons, — men who know every thing, and can do every thing superlatively well. If a man is a ship-builder, he need not go outside of his trade to find room and necessity for all his talents and time: if a house-builder, he must give his entire attention to the conditions which underlie success in that branch of industry: if a preacher, then let him remember that

preachers do not grow spontaneously; that he must devote the best years of his life to the art and toil, until his head whitens, before he can feel that the gospel receives a fit utterance through his lips. The preacher must press the richest juices of his life out in his study, if he would have his ministrations like rich wine to the hearts and souls of his hearers. There is no such thing, there never will be such a thing again, as general knowledge. All knowledge henceforth will be specific. All students must be specialists. An engineer must be an engineer, and feel, that, in the perfect knowledge of and control over the magnificent power intrusted to his hands, he has mounted to a throne, and holds a terrible sceptre. An engineer said to me the other night as I sat in the driving-house, and watched him while he sent his engine flying into the fog and darkness at the rate of fifty miles an hour, — “It is not enough,” said he, putting his lips to my ear, and shouting, so that I might hear his words amid the thundering din, — “it is not enough that I should have an eye-knowledge of this engine: I must have an *ear*-knowledge of it. And,” continued he as we rolled up to the junction, “there is not a screw, a bolt, a valve, or any part of this engine, which, should it get out of its place, and I were blindfolded, I could not instantly detect it with my ear. I tell you, sir,” he added, “a man must understand his business when he undertakes to carry safely seven hundred souls so near eternity as an engine rolls.”

That is it, friends: a man must understand his business if he is to escape risk in any thing.

Now, I am of those who believe, that, provided his election was right, and his business or profession is adapted to his capacities, a man will, on the whole, do the most good by concentrating all his energies along the line of his choice. Whatever his trade is, let him master his trade, or come just as near mastering it as a short life will allow one to do. The fact is, one life is not long enough to master any thing thoroughly. The poet is only ready to begin to sing when death puts a seal upon his lips, and forbids further music forever. So Whittier, like an instrument whose keys have only just mellowed into richness, but whose frame is just ready to fall in pieces, sings to-day. How often have we felt like saying of him and others, "Oh that his tuneful soul might not be called hence as yet, but be clothed upon with a younger and stronger body! — what melody would the world hear in the next fifty years!" So it is with man through the whole range of activity. The man of business must stop in the midst of his plans; the preacher cease to plead when knowledge has ripened, and soul been sanctified for a perfect utterance; the physician and surgeon, having toiled for fifty years, must bow to the inevitable mandate when most fitted to benefit man: and the saying is a truism, that one life is scarcely ample enough to learn one trade.

Now, friends, I hold it to be a prime obligation resting on every man, to succeed, up to the fullest measure of that success which is possible to him, in life. Success is not only pleasant: it is a duty. Look at man along whatever range of faculties, and you

will see in the perfect equipment of capacity, in the presence of every necessary energy, the obligation to succeed. In the wings of a bird, you see that the Maker has suggested flight; in the build of a dog and horse, speed; in the ox, strength. And so, through all the grades of life, God, in the organization, in the capacities bestowed, has pointed out the mode and result of life. But in man this is more observable. Look at yourself, my friend, in your faculties, in your endowments by nature, and see in the liberal, I had almost said, nay, I will say, in the superabundant resources of your organization, the suggestion, yea, the command, of your Maker. All the elements and means necessary to success in any branch of worthy industry, in any line of noble ambition, are in you. A young man has no right to fail in life. It may not be his duty to succeed in the direction and to the extent that his ambition may suggest; for ignorance may misdirect, and vanity exaggerate: but it is his duty to succeed in that direction, and to that extent, in which his natural capacities point and make possible.

Society is full of failures that need never have been made; full of men who have never succeeded, when they might have, and should have, succeeded; full of women, who, in the first half of their days, did nothing but eat and sleep and simper, and in the last half have done nothing but perpetuate their follies and weaknesses. The world is full, I say, of such people; full of men in every trade and profession who do not amount to any thing, and of girls and women without

any trade or profession who have no desire to amount to any thing: and I do not speak irreverently, and, I trust, not without due charity, without making due allowance for the inevitable in life, when I say that God and thoughtful men are weary of their presence. Every boy ought to improve on his father; every girl grow into a nobler, gentler, more self-denying womanhood than the mother. No reproduction of former types will give the world the perfect type. I know not where the millennium is, as measured by distance of time; but I do know, and so do you all, that it is a great way off as measured by human growth and expansion. We have no such men and women yet, no age has ever had any, as shall stand on the earth in that age of peace that will not come until men are worthy of it.

I do not know what you think of that millennial period, or how you are accustomed to picture it to your minds: but I have sometimes thought, by the prayers and sermons I have heard containing allusions to it, that the majority of people pictured it as a period when everybody shall take a kind of recess from their ordinary work, and go walking up and down, or lying about in groups with their eyes fastened on the heavens, kindly disposed to each other, doing no work, and having a good time generally.

Now, that is not my conception of the millennium. I do not believe in the recess idea. There will be no let-up to human activities, no dropping of ordinary work, no change of salutary employment. The difference will not lie in such things. There will be just

as many banks then as now (and not many more, I hope); but the officers will all be honest men. Railroad companies will run their trains as often as they do to-day; the difference being, that conductors will be paid better salaries, and not be tempted so much, as they are now, to steal.

I believe that all our faculties, that every energy, every force, every industry, will be in the state of the highest exercise. The sea will never be so white with sails, the earth never resound with the hum of such swift activity, never will the bustle of business be so loud, never men so active, as when the light of that blessed, that long-anticipated period shall dawn. When every man is honest, every government just, every power for good utilized, every purpose honorable, every motive pure, the world will be ready to welcome the Lord. As it is with man, so will it be with the race. Growth into the moral likeness of God means growth into the moral activities of God. Holiness knows no rest, no pause, in the outgoings of its benevolence. Increase in personal goodness means the better direction of personal power, influence, and energy. The angels of God find rest in flight. They are his messengers; and heaven to them is to do his bidding. And so it is and must be with those who live in sympathy with him on earth; who have been breathed upon by him, and feel themselves inspired to do deeds fitting such inspiration. To do his will, to serve him, and, in serving him, serve man, both day and night, is not merely their delight: it is the law of their lives. It is the most real result of

the new birth; the peculiar, the unmistakable mark which proves their connection with the Deity. The voice of Christianity is and will forever be heard crying for work. It will ring through all the ages ahead, riding the air clear as a bugle-note, swelling in volume as it rolls. It will expand on all sides, sending out waves of sound until the atmosphere of the whole world shall vibrate with its clarion-call. Humanity will be redeemed, each faculty retained, no power, no capacity, being crushed out; and as man by man is renewed into the original likeness, as the old long-lost beauty returns to the countenance, face after face will be lifted, lip after lip will part, and the prayer of each and all will be, "To spend and be spent for Christ." No sail will be folded, no wheel stopped, no bustle cease, no note slumber amid the keys for lack of touch to bring it forth, no lusty call to labor be ungiven, no mirthful laugh be checked, no poet's song unsung, in the millennial age: but piety and diligence, too long divorced, shall renew their ancient troth; and the hands that know not now the other's touch shall be reclasped, to part no more forever.

But do not think that diligence in business alone is the command of Scripture. Application is not virtue, and never will be. A busy man, who converts night into day by the ceaseless activity of his thoughts, is not necessarily a good man. The motive of his industry, the object of his perseverance, is what tests their value, and reveals his true character. I warn you men who are immersed in business-pursuits to bear this in mind. Be alarmed when you find that

the acquisition of wealth is getting to be the habit of your thoughts. The accumulation of money is not the best, not necessarily an advantageous, result of your activities. It is because a faithful attention to business develops you yourself that you are to give it. To discipline your mind; to make benevolence possible to you; to provide, not for the vanity and pride, but the necessity, of others; to put you in a position from which you can exert a healthy influence in society, — in these and like results you see the true benefit of diligence. Be careful where you lay up your treasures. You can take no money with you to heaven: you can take only your character. You know that I never introduce the subject of dying into my sermons to frighten you: that would be a poor gospel indeed which should give me no stronger name to influence your motives than death, no more powerful words with which to start you to thought than the spade and the grave. But, nevertheless, you know as well as I do that you are mortal; that there is somewhere ahead a grave for every one of you, and an hour set in which you will die; and you know, that, whether you have little or much, you cannot take one dollar of it into the next world. “What then shall I take?” do you ask. I reply, You will take your minds there: see, therefore, that you instruct them properly. You will take your imagination there: see to it that it be pure; for it is written, that nothing that defileth shall enter therein. You will take your emotional natures there: see to it, then, that, ere that hour, they be fit for the bosom and the

station of an angel. And last, but not least, you will take the result of your sins there, unless God shall mercifully remove them before you die. Keep these facts well in mind, friends and companions; for upon your daily remembrance of them will largely depend your peace and safety in your dying-hour.

Now, many of you have lived years in business-life: you have grown gray in trade and commerce. You have been here for years, and done your part to lift this city into its present prominence: it is a long while since you came to it as a boy in years and experience. Now, I wish to say a few words to you. You know that I rejoice in your prosperity, and mourn at your losses. The Lord has granted unto you to be pillars and columns of support in this his temple. The future of this church leans on you as a post not yet set into the ground leans on the holder. It is the voice of sympathy, of pride, of friendship, that needs not to be ashamed of itself, that now comes to you; and what it solicits is, that you look back over all your years of toil and struggle, over all your failures and successes, over all the dark and bright seasons of your commercial or professional life, and observe what effect it has all had upon you. You are now lifted, as it were, upon a hill-top. Before you look into the valley ahead, look for a moment on the valley back of you. It is the color of the sunset that tells us what will be the character of the coming day. You have striven for wealth; and many of you have it, or are getting it. What else have you? What else are you getting besides? This you must leave; but what have you

that you can take with you at death? When earthly raiment falls, when all the earthly conditions and surroundings with which you are arrayed now shall drop, with what will you be clothed upon? I pray God that it may be with the mantle of a perfected character, over which, both as armor and a kingly vesture, shall be seen the righteousness of Christ; for, being so clothed, you shall not be found naked.

The great danger ahead, friends, the imminent peril poisoning over us all as a hawk above its prey, ready to swoop, is materialism. Do not forget, that, in the first seventy years of the Republic's life, the lust of gain nearly destroyed us. Woe will be to us all when our young men shall see nothing heroic in business; when trade shall have nothing more honorable in it, nothing to be prized more, than money; when commerce shall be only mercenary, and the motive which impels the capacities of the people worthy only of the slave-trade! Should such a day ever come, beggary will be a blessing, and the heaviest curse felt the curse of birth. Better not be born than to live in such an age; better die in the cradle like a flower in the bud: for life will be but the unfolding of a poisonous principle, like a flower whose every leaf adds to the volume of poison already in the atmosphere; and the larger the flower, the deadlier the poison; for history, if it proves nothing else, proves at least this, — that "a nation which knows not God shall utterly perish."

There is probably not a Christian man present who does not agree in substance with me. You see the danger; you have felt the force of the pressure, even

in your own characters. You see to what peril the young men are to be exposed. What, then, are you doing to prevent it? Have you warned your boy of the great risk of the age? Have you re-enforced, are you re-enforcing, the nobler impulses of his soul by your example? You may be safe; but is he safe? You were seasoned and sobered by early poverty; but he begins life with the advantage, as you think, and as he thinks, of wealth. God grant it may not prove to his hurt! Wealth should not hurt him; and will not, if you teach him to look upon it rightly. But warn him. Tell him that a full stream means a swift current; tell him that he must be a better man, a more spiritual-minded man, than his father has been, or he will be a great deal worse. No generation should go to its grave until it has given to the one that is to follow it the benefit of its experience. I think of the graves where your fathers sleep; I think of the mounds scattered all through the country graveyards of New England, where your mothers repose. They were, for the most part, I presume, hard-working people, honest and economical. They loved the sabbath and the sanctuary; they educated you to work; they impressed you with their own habits; they gave unto you, before you left them, the best they knew of wisdom. Go and do likewise. Pay to those graves the deep debt of gratitude you owe them by transmitting to your children the lesson of your experience, as they transmitted to you the teachings of theirs.

It is the relation of business, of all activity to

man's development, it is in the object that all these exercises subserve, that we see their honor and dignity. Any exercise which will build your character up in worthiness, which will strengthen your integrity, make a wider benevolence possible to you, cause you to be powerful as an example for good, is indeed honorable. Viewed in this light, business, the professions, the arts, the sciences, trade, and commerce, are all honorable: viewed in any other, they are all base. Whatever lowers the average of virtue, gives discipline and prominence to cunning, encourages covetousness, ministers to vanity and ostentation, binds a man down to the earthy, — whatever does this is bad and base and wicked: for man's pursuits should improve man; should ennoble, and not debase; should prepare, and not unfit him for another and a better sphere. Prove all things, friends; hold fast to that which is good.

If I am anxious for you; if I carry you who are in the midst of gainful pursuits most on my heart; if in my best moods, when I realize the vanity of this world most, and the dignity of the life to come, and if, when, with every faculty quickened by the Spirit, I seem lifted out of myself into a state and stature more akin to such aspirations, — if then I bear you to the Father of your souls, and, standing there in front of the great white throne, plead for you, it is not for your sakes alone I plead, but for the sake of all living, and of all yet to be born. The time was when those who urged on the industries of the world were of little influence or weight. The indolent class held

the sceptre ; the drones ruled the hive. The reverse is true to-day. Trade and commerce are no longer the proof of menial blood. The marks which demonstrate royalty are other than they were of old time. The business-men of the country can alone save the country. Piety must look to you for her noblest examples. If in your natures and lives Christianity meets with failure, I know not where or to whom she may look for success. The strength of morality as a substitute for religion is derived from the imperfect example of professed Christians. If you lived better, you would convert more.

You will pardon this plainness of speech if it be founded upon an erroneous apprehension of the forces that underlie society. If it be founded on a correct analysis, I ask no excuse for it ; let it all stand, albeit the words are grave : for if you do, in the providence of God, occupy the position I hold you do, then it behooves you to look to it that you meet your obligations to the letter.

And now, friends, I have said what I had in mind, and what I prepared to bring before you this morning. You see on which side my caution leans ; you have my whole mind touching your duty and your danger : I need add no more. May the Spirit, who is mighty to apply the truth, take of my weak words, and make them strong !

How these sabbaths come and go ! How swiftly the weeks pass ! and how the years are being multiplied upon us ! Many a patch of vapor have I seen

rise from the valley, and melt away, leaving no trace ; many another patch have I seen rise from the low level, lifted by strong currents of air until the sun met it with its rays, and changed from gray to crimson its edges burning like opals, keeping its coherence, float out of mortal vision, that sought in vain to follow it along its path of glory : and I have said to myself, “ Life is indeed like a vapor ; but what difference there may be, even in vapor ! And what difference there may be in two lives ! — one visible only when moving in the dense atmosphere of this earth, but disappearing the instant it rises above the dampness of its home ; the other seen indeed from the start, but never so prominent as when the other fades ; never truly resplendent until it has been lifted far above the earth, and is borne away in the clear light of God.”

SABBATH MORNING, SEPT. 24, 1871.

SERMON.

SUBJECT.—VALUE OF PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE AND CONTACT WITH
THE VICIOUS AS THE MEANS FOR THEIR REFORMATION.

“BUT THEIR SCRIBES AND PHARISEES MURMURED AGAINST HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING, WHY DO YE EAT AND DRINK WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS?”—Luke v. 30.

I WILL read you the entire passage from which the text is taken; for it gives us a very vivid and peculiar picture of Christ in his relation to the vicious class of his time, and forces upon our attention his method of procedure. This is the way it is recorded in the Gospel by Luke:—

“And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus, answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The Church, friends, has passed beyond the period of theological discussions. Whatever is intricate in exegesis, or difficult in interpretation, has been made plain; at least, as much so as human ingenuity and close attention may ever do it. Nineteen hundred years of discussion of the doctrines of the Bible, as they are styled, have left us little to discuss. Not that scholarship is no longer needed; not that new discoveries will not reward patient examination: but the problems of the past will not be the problems of the future. The intellectual forces of the Church are still needed in all their vigor; but they will be exercised in new directions, and toward new objects. In its theology the Church is ripe. Its branches are heavy with the matured thought of centuries. They droop under the collected results of two thousand years of growth. For one (and I believe I speak for a large class of preachers), I accept the theology of the fathers. Doctrinally, I desire no "new departure." The main, underlying facts of gospel narrative I put full faith in. I desire no novelties of doctrine or interpretation. The fathers laid the foundations deep, and made them strong. My trowel shall never start the old cement. I am anxious only touching the superstructure.

It is not the interpretation, but the application of the gospel to human affairs, that concerns us of to-day. The reduction of Christianity to practice, and not the formulating it into systems, — this is what concerns us.

How to best incarnate the truth we believe, how we can win others to our mode of life,—this is the problem; and to this I urge that all your energies be ceaselessly directed.

Remember that books give no adequate expression to Christian truth. Christian men alone express Christianity. The character and the acts of Christ are a stronger proof of his divinity than his words. Study his sayings only that you may come to a better knowledge of him. As the lenses of a telescope are valuable only as they assist the eye to behold the star, so the words of the Bible are precious to us only because they bring Christ nearer to us, and cause us to have a clearer and more distinct vision of him. Now, the passage I have read presents Christ to us as a spiritual laborer. He wished to reach and convert a certain class of men; and it shows us how he went to work to do it. In other passages he has instructed us by speech, verbal directions; but here he teaches us by example. The lesson is very plain. The inference touching our own duty is direct. Personal acquaintance and intercourse is here held up to us as the true method of putting a moral influence on wicked men. The idea is this: If you wish to convert a man, go to him.

One thing may as well be settled first as last, — that non-intercourse never converted a sinner yet. If you touch nothing soiled in this world, you will keep your own hand white, beyond doubt; but you will never cleanse any thing. You cannot wash dishes at long range. When Christ went down to the house of

Levi the publican, to the great feast Levi had made for him, and sat down with those men whom society despised and hated, and justly too, he did not merely a brave act, but one of the wisest of his life. In the first place, it brought him face to face with a class of men that nobody cared for. The publicans were, as a whole, a villanous set; and society estimated them about right. It is safe to say, that even a Pharisee could not curse them too roundly; for their propensities to cheat and oppress were notorious. The tax-gatherers in Ireland during the years of famine were not more cordially or justly hated by the starving peasantry than were the publicans by the Jews. They were a despised, cruel, and neglected class, with neither social nor church connection. The only earthly reason that Christ could give for going down to eat and talk, and, as I suppose, laugh, with these men, was that each one of them *had a soul*. Yea, every sharp-faced, thin-lipped, low-browed, keen-eyed money-gatherer before him *had a soul*. He had no pious parents, no respectable family connections; he had never been religiously educated; he had no mother to pray for him; he was not even a back-sliding church-member; there was not a respectable man in Palestine who would introduce him to his daughters; he was an earthly-minded, unprincipled villain. But he *had a soul*. That was enough. That was all the excuse Christ had; the only possible reason that he could give friend and foe for eating with them. He needed no other. Whoever had a soul belonged to him; at least, in effort, in sympathy, in

hope. For just such people as these he had left heaven. These were the very ones he came to call to repentance. To win their love, to make them like him, and thus adopt his mode of life ; to send a shaft of light through the mirk of their sordidness ; to cleave it through and through, and dissipate it, — this was his aim. And it should be the aim of every Christian to-day who labors among the vicious for Christ.

Well, that feast cost Christ something. The pious and horrified Pharisees tacked a name on to him which followed and clung to him, as a slanderous report often will follow and cling to a good man, to his dying-day. They styled him, after that, a “*friend of publicans and sinners.*” They cried it up and down through the whole country, that “Jesus of Nazareth had been eating with the tax-gatherers, fraternizing with the people’s oppressors and loose characters.” They said that he was nothing in the world but a wine-bibber and a glutton ; that, if he cast out devils, it was only by the help of the Devil ; that the roughs and refuse of Palestine were swarming to him ; and that he affiliated with them, and declared everywhere that these should go into heaven before church-members and the best people of the land.

The bigots and gossips of that day had a fine time of it, I warrant ; and fast and swift did they roll up that wave of calumny and misrepresentation which broke at last in bloody foam on Calvary.

Well, what had Christ gained ? He had done, it must be admitted, a strange thing ; lost his good name and much influence by it among the religious class.

And what had he gained? This, I answer: He had got at last face to face with the men he wanted to better. He knew their names, their vices, their good spots, and their bad ones; had had a chance to study their mode of thought, learn something of their personal history and the history of their families, and to get their affections. Don't start at that. I think those publicans grew quickly to love Christ. In the first place, he had already acquired great fame in the country, and they would naturally feel flattered by his notice. They saw also, that, in accepting their invitation, he had done an unpopular deed for himself; and this must have stirred them to gratitude. But, above all, his urbanity and approachableness, his simplicity of speech, and the entire absence of the holier-than-thou feeling in looks, dress, or manner, — all this, and much besides, must have drawn them toward him in cordial gratitude and respect.

It must not be supposed that such a class of men are slow to recognize goodness. They acknowledge it readily, and respect it most heartily; but it must be real. No sham passes current among them. It must be a piety which makes the heart kind, and the hand warm, and which talks of Christ in a natural tone of voice, and an open, beaming face. Now, I presume that the Saviour in his humanity was one of the most natural of men. In this consisted his great contrast to the Pharisees. He was a Galilean peasant, and dressed as such. He was a carpenter's son, and knew by experience what manual labor is. He had never been drilled to write sermons in a modern theological

school, where the student, in order to stand high, must discover considerable more truth than God ever revealed; nor had he ever got the prayer-meeting tone, or the severe and solemn expression, considered by many humble and orthodox: but he was a simple-spoken, grave-faced, kind-hearted young man. This at least, I presume, was what he appeared to the publicans when he sat down to supper. He had won his opportunity, I say; and I warrant, that, ere that feast was over, even their sordid natures had been quickened toward their wonderful guest, and some had eaten of bread which forbids hunger, and drunk of water which banished thirst forever.

Now, what the churches in their individual capacity want is contact, personal contact, with those whom they are to better. The great motives of reform are to be inculcated individually. When a good man has won the respect and affection of a bad man, he has the evil in him at a tremendous disadvantage. The strength of the North-End Mission lies in its *personnel*. In that field good people have put themselves in contact with bad people, and Satan is being thwarted. It is not their alms, but the kindly touch of their hands, their faces, their presence, their wise, pleasant, and hopeful words, that make their mission a success. Their system is right, because they are copying after Christ. They are demonstrating their error to those who have lost faith in the happiness of virtue, and impressing the discouraged with the hopefulness of moral effort. They have taken hold of sin here just as you, through your missionaries, took hold of it in

the Sandwich Islands; and the result, if they persevere, will be the same. He who doubts it doubts the strength of virtue, the energy of truth, the power of energized love, and the omnipotence of God.

There is another characteristic of piety that must not be overlooked. Mild and gentle as it is, it is full of antagonisms to whatever is unlike itself in nature. It cannot reconcile itself to nor endure the presence of evil. It walks the streets of our cities with the *pose* of a soldier when carrying his musket at the "charge." Its features are set, inflexible, as an old veteran's when he marches into the blaze of batteries. The bodies of dead reputations are around him everywhere, and the air vibrant with danger. It is not because Christians court opposition that they are so often found at war with the established usages and customs of society, but because the positions that the two parties occupy insure inevitable collision. You take a boy, and educate him, I care not whether by purely human processes, or by human and heavenly processes conjoined, to dislike and regard as wrong certain courses of action, and you have pledged him to battle them by the very sympathies of his nature. Let, now, these virtuous instincts, and abhorrence of vice, be confirmed by years of experience and observation among men; let observation corroborate Scripture, and re-enforce parental education as to the destructive effects of sin upon persons and society, — and the man will be more intolerant of vice than was the boy. Reason will now act in conjunction with conscience; knowledge of causes and effects in society

will stimulate the growth of what is most positive in his piety ; and he will look upon sin as a realist looks upon the untruthful in art, — as something to be condemned and wiped out. Religion should find its stanchest advocates among the business-men of a country ; among those of the wisest experience in human affairs, and most familiar with the practical working of things : for you who are of this class know well that public prosperity and preponderating vices cannot co-exist in a community ; that, by as much as you sink a single street or section of this city in drunkenness or any other vice, by so much do you detract not only from its capacity to produce, but also to consume. An ignorant, imbruted population buy little. As you press a man down to the level of an animal, you contract the circle of his wants. His value as a customer is lessened as his vices increase. You might as well banish one-half the local custom of this city as to allow public morality to fall away to that extent.

Now, as you all know, vice is always aggressive ; and between it and the intelligence of the country there will ever be conflict. The contest will grow fiercer and fiercer as the points of difference are better apprehended by the participants. Every legitimate business in this city, every grocery and store and factory, is committed by the instinct of trade to oppose the increase of drunkenness and gambling and idleness in our midst. Intelligence, which brings with it the knowledge of wants ; and virtue, which begets industry by the wages of which those wants

are supplied, — are what cause wealth to accumulate, and trade to prosper. Political economy and religion are natural allies. God has pledged us to missionary effort by the most selfish of all instincts, — the instinct of money-getting. He has made success in things earthly dependent upon progression in things spiritual. He has stamped into the very substance of human society, that virtue pays.

But, if trade cannot tolerate iniquity in this city, much less can piety. If the business-man *as* a business-man is bound to oppose its every development in our midst, when may the Christian become listless? If Pearl Street and Commercial Wharf are directly interested in the North End and the South Cove, what are the churches of Boston to say touching the state of society in these localities? The churches of Christ are interested in these places: they are interested as a gentleman is interested in a miserable marsh that lies in front of his house, marring his view, and sending up its foul miasms to spread over his lawn, and stream through his windows into his rooms. It is not only an unsightly, an offensive, but a dangerous object: its exhalations are loaded with contagion; it is the very source of disease; its continuance is a shame and disgrace to his enterprise, and an impeachment of his affections. If he loves his children, he will remove the evil from them. It is just so touching this accumulation of vice within hailing-distance of our churches. Here are entire sections of the city given over to be populated and possessed by viciousness; and we plume ourselves if we keep it

within its own bounds. We give up one house out of every three to be a brothel, a gambling-den, or a rum-shop, and then rejoice that our morals are so well protected. We make one-half of the city a safe spot for a lady to walk in by day, and one-third of it tolerably secure for gentlemen by night, and call our method of city government a success. I would like to know, would like to ask this question of some of you who are interested in this thing, because God has made it the city of your residence, and the city of your hope, and the city where your children are to live, — I would like to ask you what *you* think of it? Here you are, Christian men of large means and large influence, — influential enough to be felt in the Sandwich Islands, in Africa, in Asia, in China, and in every known land under heaven, — and your own city is not half Christianized. I say, and I believe that I speak the simple truth, that the state of things here, morally considered, is a shame upon every man and woman of influence in this city that call themselves Christians. Why, look at it. Here we are living year in and year out with a marsh right in front of us; the atmosphere which we breathe, and which our wives and children breathe, absolutely fetid and rank with moral rottenness; our jails filled to overflowing; our streets so insecure, that you must needs, in many sections of the city, keep your policemen within sight of each other; the sabbath so openly disregarded, that desecration is habitual, and excites no comment. And all we have done, so far, has been this: We have hired some twelve or twenty

men and women to go down each year, and throw a thousand Bibles, and twenty thousand religious tracts as large as the palm of your hand, into this huge bayou of blue mud. I ask you to tell me how long it will take to fill it up at this rate? Do you think that the stench will be taken out of the air by sprinkling the lavender of the City Missionary Society over the pillows on which your consciences now sleep, undisturbed by the miasms that every gust of crime blows up into your bedrooms? I know I am saying what will offend many; for religious egotism is always offended at any impeachment of its wisdom or earnestness. It hates the man who takes it by the shoulders, and turns it about, and makes it look an ugly fact square in the face; and the fact is, that men and women are living and dying by scores in this city, weekly, without any knowledge of God. The eyes of their torment look out upon a hundred church-steeples as they close in death, and their lids droop over the redness of an anguish that you have never tried to alleviate. They go up to God with the mirk of their sins upon them, as leaves which a tornado shovels out of the soil are flung up into the screaming air; they go up, as your doctrines teach, to be condemned. And who are those who will be condemned along with them? Can you tell me? I imagine, that, in their day of trial, their voices will be heard. They shall not be gagged before that great assize: they shall plead their cause; they shall pour forth their complaint. They will say, "Condemn us not, O Thou who wert not known by us! We did not know thy law; we

did not know the truth ; we never heard a word — oh ! believe us, we never heard a syllable — of Jesus. Bear not on us too hard, O God !” And one shall speak and say, “ I was born in drunkenness. My vernacular was the language of obscenity. I learned to swear upon my mother’s breast. There was no sabbath where I lived. To me the churches of which you speak were only public buildings : I had no right to them, nor had my father. I went to school ; but it was to wickedness. I graduated, but only from one degree of crime to another. Thy name was known only to give emphasis to our oaths : and though I lived among your people, as you call them, twenty years, not a man mentioned the name of Jesus to me ; not a woman gave me even a look, save of disgust or fear. O God ! bear not too hard upon me, but remember in thy judgment my hard lot on earth.”

My friends, theirs is a hard lot. A child born last night in one of a thousand tenements of this city was born to a life-long curse. It is not that he is born to poverty ; that can be borne, and not kill. And some have borne it in the silence of a pride that jested away its bitterness, and made themselves insensible to its sting by their indifference : they took their crust in patience, and made mirth of it, and would have died from sheer starvation, or ever they had given up a single plan, or owned that they were beaten, — died with a curve of humor on their lips, saying, “ Poverty, you joined issue with me in my cradle ; and I have fought you, and I have won !” No : the curse that burdens them is not poverty. But they are born unto

the curse of ignorance and its lead-like pressures ; to the curse of rank appetite, with its swinish instincts ; to the curse of lust engendered of drunkenness and all its coarse inflammations ; to the curse of instinctive and hereditary knavery, which shall not miss of teachers ; to the curse of days that have no honest service, of weeks that have no sabbath, of a life that has no God, and a death that has no hope. O God ! why are such lives repeated ? Why are such creatures born ? Why must the mould and mildew and rot fasten forever on that tree which thou didst plant in Adam, and taint with their bursting offensiveness the air of the whole world ? Is there no change, no blessed change, ahead ? — no cold, dry breeze to come from some point of the round heavens, and blow its breath upon this constantly-maturing corruption, and check it once and forever ?

There is. A change shall come, — a blessed change. A wind shall blow, a mystic wind, whence and whither we know not : but in its passing it shall pass over man ; and all his cleaving defilement shall part from him and fall away, and human nature shall be as in the beginning, — fair to look upon, and very good. There comes a prophecy to my lips of that great day. If Ignorance has ears, let her listen as I proclaim it ; for her dull eyes shall yet be lighted, and her now stolid features become mobile with intelligence. Her swarms shall lose their look of squalor ; and, lifted out of their degradation, they shall sit, whitefaced and cleanly, among the children of Wisdom. Yea, and if Vice could hear me, if I had a power within me to

call it from where it burrows and nests; if I could by some Ithuriel-like touch start it from its coiled concealment, and make it stand impersonate before you, — then here from this sacred place, where Religion, grander in nature and act than any expression man can give to it, has her home, you being hearers and witnesses, — here would I pronounce its doom. Standing over against it, apprehending all its power and force and cunning, all its alliances and combinations, and the strength derived therefrom, would I say to it, “Thy day is set; the leer and cunning of thy look shall leave thy face, the brutality of thy neck be sweated off; thy brow shall lift, thy wicked shrewdness be changed to useful skill, thy pilfering fingers acquaint themselves with honest industry; and, being by the power of God renewed in nature, the force and energy of all thy powers shall be devoted unto him and man.”

Say not that this is wild prediction. Do not call my words extravagant. Let not my prophecy fail through your unbelief. This thing shall be, must be; for he who speaks along the line of God’s purposes speaks safely. And the divine wish is, — who can doubt it? — that Boston, through all its streets and squares, in all its trade and commerce, in all its art and science and out-blossoming culture, yea, and in its every household, shall be Christian. Bring out the banner, then; the banner of God; the banner of the cross and star; the banner which has led the van of the world’s progress for these two thousand years. — Why, there are flags in yonder Capitol that men have

followed proudly to death. There may be those within the sound of my voice whose eyes have seen those tattered ensigns amid the dust of battle. You saw them wave amid whirling smoke and the fiery flame of war, and stood to your arms beneath them, when the air was thick with shot and shell, and brave men fell around you like autumn-leaves. And you shall have your fame. It shall live in chiselled marble and the breathings of music. The granite, proud of such alliance, shall wed your immortality with its endurance, and your fame shall never be forgotten among men: for America, the latest born among nations, and, as I hold, the greatest, in her destiny has taken you to herself, as those who saved her in peril, and she will love you until death; and when America — the America that is to be — dies, the world dies.

But what are earthly compared to spiritual victories? and what are those tattered flags at the Capitol beside the banner under which the armies of God march on? What are they? Nothing. They are like rags beside the vesture of a king. They type the strength of man: this gives expression to the power of God. They symbolize an earthly nationality: this publishes to the wide universe the name of Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. — Bring out this banner, then, I say, — the banner of God, the banner of the cross and star, — and give it to me, and let me plant it here; and as its folds stream out like waves of living light that chase each other, coming out of distance, and go into distance, crested with murmur and music, keeping their full swell, tell me as you see

it with its emblazonry—the Lion of the tribe of Judah—of burnished gold on a blue field, and hear the swelling of its undulations,—tell me, I say, if those who stand marshalled beneath it, clothed in the full armor of God, shall not go on to victory. My friends, the man who doubts is infidel against God and the great destiny of man.

SABBATH MORNING, OCT. 1, 1871.

SERMON.

TOPIC.—LOVE THE SOURCE OF OBEDIENCE.

“IF A MAN LOVE ME, HE WILL KEEP MY WORDS.”—John xiv. 23.

I THINK there is nothing that a sincere Christian more desires than to keep the commandments of Christ. He is so thoroughly persuaded of their essential worthiness, he so fully and willingly acknowledges the obligation they impose, the Scripture has so educated him to regard them as tests of piety, that he has become very sensitive upon the subject; and years only serve to increase this sensitiveness. These commandments are so inherently just, so conducive to the defence of his own virtue, so conservative to public morals, so salutary to society at large, that he longs to obey the voice of Him who spake as never man spake. But human nature is human nature still; and lapses occur daily. At no time have we found ourselves doing the whole “law of the Lord.” Temptations come, and are yielded to; and the more anxious we are to stand in all the ordinances of the law blameless, the more we are convicted of failure. Effort is constant; and yet we do not attain.

Baffled and discouraged, men are continually tempted to say, "It cannot be done ; human nature can never succeed I will do the best I can, and leave my failures in the hands of God's mercy."

Now, I doubt if there is a single true professor in divine presence here this morning but that has felt this feeling a thousand times. You never have succeeded in entirely doing what you feel you should do, what you heartily desire to do ; and failure has at last made you indifferent or despondent. You have either given over the attempt, settled down into the conviction that obedience is beyond your power, and thence are feeding your hopes with a false consolation ; or else, while you keep on trying and trying, feel you shall never succeed. You do not impeach the propriety of the demand ; but you do despair of full and triumphant compliance.

Now, both of these feelings are bad. They are injurious to Christian growth ; they put an indirect aspersion upon God ; they sap the very foundations of that structure which the Holy Ghost seeks to rear within us, and in order to build which, faith and works must enter in equal proportions.

But, friends, may it not be that our ill success is due to some other causes than those to which we attribute it ? May it not be that we have misunderstood the philosophy of the subject, and fail to appropriate the forces which would have surely pushed us on toward success ? Whence, then, comes the power ? What and where is this divine energy, which, were it constantly in our hearts, would, with a sweet, an

irresistible authority, — an authority that we should gladly recognize and yield to, — command obedience?

It seems to me that Christ, in the passage we have read as our text, has suggested the true philosophy to us, pointed out the true source of power to his followers: “If *ye love me*, ye will keep my commandments.” Please attend while I unfold this suggestion before you. Listen, and inwardly digest what I say.

Love is a passion; and the strongest, most unconquerable forces in human nature are the passions. There is a freshet-like sweep to them. Like rivers in spring-time, when the snows are melting on the mountains, and the clouds, driven by south winds, are emptying their waters upon the earth, they rise and swell, and surge and overflow, submerging the whole nature. How this current sweeps on, roaring as it goes! Every faculty is covered, and judgment is but a little skiff, tossing about on the waves, spun around in the eddies, and borne on by the headlong flow. And whoever has watched himself, or observed men, to any purpose, knows that the passions are the strongest forces of our nature.

There is one mistake almost every one makes. Parents make it; teachers make it; government makes it. It is this: they mistake the nature and the origin of passion. They act as if passions were evil by nature, and devilish in their origin. This is not so. God is the parent of our passions: he begat love, and said, “It is the fulfilling of the law;” that is, the force out of which all obedience comes. Not that love it-

self fulfils the law ; for no sentiment can take the place of, can do away with, works : but love is the fulfilment of the law in that out of it comes all fulfilment of the law ; it is the central wheel ; it is the great belt which impels in needed revolution every shaft and wheel in the entire establishment, — just as we say of a man, “ That man’s fortune is in his brains.” Not that it is in dollars and cents actually there ; not that stores and blocks of granite are really within the circumference of his skull : but that within his brain are the forces that shall win the wealth, construct the buildings, which represent his fortune. This is what we mean when we say that a man’s fortune is in his brain ; and that is what God means when he says in Scripture that “ love is the fulfilling of the law.”

It is in the perversion, and not in the nature, of the passions, that you see their wickedness. The sin is in their misdirection, and not in their origin. How else can you explain the charge of the apostle, “ Be ye angry, and sin not ” ? Did he not plainly teach, not only the rank and inherent worth of a passion, but also the propriety and innocence of its legitimate exercise ? Why, the very conception of a man is as a passionate creature (I use the word in its higher sense, of course). You might as well say that a current is a current when there is no motion to it, or air is air with no oxygen in it, as that man is man if he is devoid of passion ; for he was made in the image of God, and everywhere in Scripture God speaks of himself as a passionate being. He “ hates ” and “ loves ”

and "laughs" and "pities." At the heart of all intelligence is glow and warmth, and possibilities of excitement and heat. Passion is that vital and vitalizing force in human nature that makes it to leaf and flower and fructify. In its sanctified forms you see the Godlike in man; in its debased, the satanic. When pure, when refined, when noble, you see in it the beneficence of a God; when stained, gross, and depraved, the malevolence of a devil.

Now, when Christ, the greatest and wisest of all teachers, came, he understood this. He knew the use of passion; for it was his own child. He created man with it. He knew, too, its potency; for, when man was begotten, he supplied it to him in due measure and force. When he began to teach, he claimed his child. He did not go to the conscience, and say, "Convict;" he did not go to the reverential faculty, and say, "Adore;" he did not go to the reason, and say, "Argue, speculate." No: he did not go to these weaker, these outlying, these marginal forces: he went straight and at once to the great central force in Nature, — to that engine-like power in man, which has power not merely to propel itself, but to start all the long train of faculties that are behind it, and dependent upon it, into motion. He went directly to this, I say, and said, "Love." In all his teachings, he never forgot this. It runs through all his words and acts, clinging to them, and making itself prominent, as a minor cord in music makes itself heard amid the rush of contending sounds by its clear quietness, and, when the crash of the chorus has ceased, still clings

to the atmosphere, as if unwilling to leave it ; and you feel that that clear, quiet strain has dominated by its very sweetness over all the other parts.

When you are at home to-day, and have time to digest what I am saying, recall what the Scriptures assert touching this matter, and you will see *how true* this remark is. Christ used it everywhere. In the case of the poor wicked woman, whose tears fell on his feet when he was at dinner with the Pharisee, he made it the measure of forgiveness. It was because she *loved* much that she was *forgiven* much. He made it the source of all obedience, as in our text : " If ye *love* me, ye will keep my commandments." His prayer for his disciples was, " That they might be one in love as I and the Father are one." The apostle John, speaking, remember, by inspiration, made it the test of regeneration : " If ye love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God whom you have not seen ? " And, as if he would put it so that all eyes that are ever lifted in prayer must see it, he seized his pen again, and wrote across the very face of his exhortation, in letters that glow to-day, and will while the Bible is read, with the fervor of his desire, "*God is love.*" Let us say no more, friends ; for that exhausts the resources of statement, and lifts the mind to a summit beyond which it cannot mount.

But, second, I would remark that it is no more true that love is inherent and divine in its origin, that it is made the central and majestic force in the divine economy over man's growth, than that it requires a person to elicit it.

Regarded as a sentiment, love is possible in respect to principles ; but, regarded as a passion, it is possible only touching a person. No one dies for abstract truth. Idealize it, connect it with something tangible, and man will die for it, — not before. Even then his self-sacrifice is impelled by regard, necessity, or the force of collateral circumstances. A patriot does not lay down his life for liberty in the front rank of battle with the same feeling which fills the bosom of a frontiersman when he dies fighting at the door of his log-cabin in an heroic attempt to defend his wife and children from the murderous savages. We admire beauty ; we reverence virtue ; we praise modesty as elements of character : but never until these are embodied, until the eyes behold them clothed in physical form, never until the woman, who, we believe, represents these qualities, stands before us, do we love them. The qualities we admire ; the woman we love. Here, at this point, you see how love educates one in worthy directions. The man loves the woman, the woman the man, and each the qualities that the other represents. Each educates the other into a finer appreciation, a truer regard, a higher emulation, of the virtues each embody ; and thus, as Tennyson sings,

“ They grow together,
Dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free.”

They grow to be each more like the other, — the man more like the woman, she liker to the man. In this great love of assimilation going on between

those who truly love, based on the apprehension of embodied virtues, I find the true source of that gratitude in my heart, that God took flesh, and dwelt among us. Before Christ came, God was an abstraction, a collection of powers and principles, august and lovely, known to the reason, the conscience, the reverential faculties, but not to the warm, passionate side of human nature. Idolatry always had this one bright side to it, this one warm ray lying aslant the waves that rolled men onward only to wreck. On the part of the honest and ignorant devotees, the image of wood or stone, however rude, however grotesque, embodied God. Their minds were too weak, too darkened, too ignorant, to conceive of abstract qualities. As you cannot make a babe understand any thing of the existence and offices of maternity save by the clasped form of the mother; so these poor weaklings — babes in intellect, in moral apprehension — knew nothing of God save as they saw him with their eyes. They wanted a tangible deity, — one they could bring their offerings of fruit and wine to personally, and go away feeling that they had ministered to his happiness. Alas that any on this earth of ours are ignorant to-day that the “Word was made flesh”! Alas that they know not of Him who was in all points like as they are, save as to their sins! And may God forgive us, who, having this living, breathing, personal Saviour revealed to us, love him so little! What will you say when these poor heathen, in their longings and strugglings and gropings for that one thing which you have, and will not take, shall condemn you?

Who of you is it, friends, that is meant when the Scripture says, "The first shall be last, and the last first"? And yet you would not think, civilized, cultured, and amiable as you are, to put yourself on the level of a heathen before God.

We have now advanced so far, friends, that we can begin to understand the text. "If ye love *me*," said Christ: observe, he did not say, "If you love the principles I represent, if you believe the truth I teach, if you imitate my virtue, you *will* keep my commandments;" but he said, "If you love *me*," me the person, me the incarnate God, me your Lord and Master, me your Elder Brother, "you will keep my commandments." Do not forget this distinction, friends. Do not fail to revolve it in your minds as you go down to your homes. It is not *truth*, but Him who is the "Truth and the Life," you are to love. It is not virtue, but Him who embodies it, you are to admire. It is not power, but Him who wields it with the heart of a lover and the hand of a friend, you are to address in prayers. It is not purity, white as a marble statue, robed in snowy drapery, you are to admire, but Him, the warm, living embodiment of it, whose absolute stainlessness is tinted with the warm glow of his humanity, and whose form is not of chiselled alabaster, immobile and rigid, but vibrant with sympathy, and as sensitive to emotion as a happy mother to the touch and cry of her first-born.

Is it not just at this point that we are able to see why religion is so cold and unexpressive in the case of almost all of us? Our philosophy is at fault. We

have put truth in front of Him who revealed it. We keep the principles, but lose the person, of Christ. We associate our lives, in their growth, with a few great principles, instead of with the one great God. We have preached to defend and explain creeds more than to present Jesus to the hearer. We have lost sight of the sun in our eager chase to capture the sunbeams ; and Christ might say, in a voice which should have in it the sadness and rebuke of all the ages, " You have loved my *doctrines* more than you have *me* ! "

Why, whence comes the charm of love, and loving life ? Is it not grouped around some person, as fragrance around a flower ? Does it not come from the eye, the voice, the face, the form, of the one beloved ? Let the loved form be stricken, the voice silent, the eye veiled beneath the fringed drapery of the lid, nevermore at any call of yours — whether of soft whisper or agonizing scream — to open, and where is the charm of your love gone ? It is gone out, I answer, with the personal life that expressed it ; gone with the soul when it passed in its midnight flight ; gone as the fragrance goes when you shake the leaves of the rose from their fastenings ; gone back to God who gave it ; and " your house is left unto you desolate. " What is domestic life now ? It is what a fountain of marble and bronze is when the waters have ceased to play ; when the sound of the pattering and splashing of the spray is gone, the jets no longer mark their tiny curves in the air, and the tinted bubbles no longer dance amid the ripples at the base. And what is re-

ligious life when the face and form of Jesus are gone from the chamber of your heart ; when you no longer hear his voice as the voice of a loved one singing in the streets ; when you no longer meet the gaze of his eyes that look lovingly into yours as you look lovingly into them ; when his face lies as the face of one stretched on his bier, covered decorously with the cold linen of form and ceremony, that winding-sheet of true piety ; when you see no more his dear form walking at early morn and eventide in the garden of your soul, greeted and refreshed by the sweetness of all your faculties, yielded forth in loving homage unto him ? What, I say, is religious life, with no living Master and Lord in it, but a cold, silent, embarrassed, constrained, and mournful state, as I fear it is too often with all of us ?

You hear people say that the absence of religious emotion in our churches and among the upper classes is due to their culture and refinement. It is not so. The argument proves too much. Love is not subject to such modification. Who would say that a cultivated person cannot love as intensely as a rude one ? Must a young man marry an ignorant girl in order to be loved ? Must a girl go to an uneducated, an undeveloped, a coarse-grained man to find an affectionate husband ? Do you think that true love has one mode of expression on Beacon Hill, and another in North Street ? Is not the sweet kiss, the loving word, the gentle caress, the charitable patience, the same in the palace and the cottage ? Why, this sublime passion has but one voice, one touch,

the world over. Like some bird, true to its species, that inhabits every clime, its food, its plumage, its mode of birth and growth, its note, are everywhere the same. Oh! the birds of love fly everywhere. Like the ravens that fed the prophet, they are seen only by those whom they feed: but every eye that sees them coming is lighted with the vision of the same bright form; and every ear that hears them at all thrills to the same sweet music. I know well that some have the power more than others. There are gradations between men in the emotional as truly as in the intellectual forces. I have known women who had a talent for loving they were not learned nor brilliant women, but they had a wonderful gift to love; and, above all others I have ever met, such women are blessed. What a home theirs is! What wives, what mothers, they make! They are to their houses what a lily is to a room: they fill it with sweetness without an effort. I never see such a one but that I realize the significance of the old Oriental beatitude, "Blessed is the tent that covers a loving woman." I recognize this difference, I say: but it is a difference in natural endowment, and not of condition; and nowhere should the emotional element be found in richer development, nowhere should a warm, tender, joyful love for Christ exist in greater measure, than among those most favored in culture and refinement. The fields that have a southern exposure should have not only the most, but the sweetest flowers.

A word now touching the *power* of love.

Obedience is the hardest of all things, for those naturally inclined not to obey, to do. It is so with a child. There is not one of us who did not find it so in childhood. And it is therefore necessary to bring the strongest possible motive to bear upon the child, that he may obey. The strongest part of the dam should be that against which the current sets. This is true with Christians; for we are all but little children in our relation to the government of God. Therefore it is that Christ points out to us the strongest possible motive, "love."

But you say, "My children love me; but they do not mind me. That motive does not make them obedient. I have to re-enforce it by other ones, — as hope of reward, fear of punishment." Possibly. But observe, here is the statement, Christ's own language: you see what he says; and, by analogy and all reasoning, the same law should be true between you and your children as is true between him and us. But reflect a minute. I am given to doubt your statement. Let me inquire, have you ever shown your child the connection between your love and his disobedience, between your heart and his wrong conduct? Have you made the little fellow understand how his behavior *hurts* you? Has he seen pain, real pain, or anger, in your face, when you caught him in mischief? Have you sought to restrain him (pardon the expression) as you would a young dog, — by the stamp of your foot and the glance of your eye? or as a parent should, — by moral education? Some people appeal more to brute fear in their children than they do to

human love. Never will I believe, that when a child is able to understand, has been taught to perceive the relation between love and obedience, he will not yield himself a willing captive to a yoke so easy and a burden so light: at least, I found it so. It was the only thing that ever ruled me, if I ever was ruled at all.

I know this, and so do you, that love is the strongest passion known to mortals. It is stronger than hate, that sleuthhound of devilishness, which no distance tires, no threat intimidates; for death checks its cry, and puts a stop to the chase. Leaving the bloody body on the sand, it returns content to its kennel. But love is not checked, is not weakened, by death. Amid its bereavement it sings like a bird that awakes in the night, and sends its clear song fearlessly out into the darkness. I have seen a young wife and mother stand above the mound beneath which slept both husband and child. In one hand she held a bud, in the other a broken bough. She planted the rose at the head, and the shrub at the foot, of the grave. In a year, another coffin was lowered to the side of the two, and her form slept by those she loved. But the bud grew until it became a bush, covered with flowers, and the branch became a tree; and, as I looked at the two, I said, "These are the symbols of human love: the one struck its roots into the soil of death, and was grown on what men call its triumphs; the other has added to its life a thousand times, and from an emblem of grief has been changed by the

nourishment of the grave into the emblem of joy." There is no power, I say, like love. It will carry heavier burdens, bear more yokes, endure more buffeting, do more service, face more perils, live on under the sense of the deepest shame, beyond any other emotion that the heart of man is able to feel. Its face, as I picture it, is like the face of an angel, born from all eternity to be exalted, — born for a throne, for power, for principality; a face bearing in all its lineaments the image of the Faultless; a face in which sweetness and majesty contend as the hues of morning contend at dawn for possession of the eastern sky, until they mingle and blend, making by their union the perfect light of the full day: and no power, no, not even sin itself, can so mar its features, that traces of its original and celestial beauty may not be seen amid the wreck and ruin of its once glorious countenance. Go to the dungeon; and through the grated door its voice comes forth, saying, "Behold! walls of stone cannot compress me; fetter and bar cannot bind me; chill and dampness cannot stop the warm current of my veins." Go to the stake; and, when you thought to hear only the scream of agony, you see an eye lighted with the assurance of hope, and catch the voice of song cleaving the flame. Go to the rack, — to those chambers of torture in which cunning invention is taxed to supply the forces of cruelty, — and hear it exclaim, while bar and cord, pulley and pincer, are being plied, "You can tear and rend this body limb from limb, and joint from joint: but me you cannot rend;

me you cannot destroy. You can batter down the door ; you can level the walls of my habitation : but I, I shall fly forth at death into the larger liberty, the larger life, of my native skies."

This, friends, is the passion to which Christ appealed when pointing out to his disciples the great motive of obedience. This is that sublime, indestructible passion, that great gulf-stream of influence, which flows through the frozen ocean of our lives, bringing summer and song and the fragrance of all the tropics in its train. Upon islands belted with ice, along shores white with frozen surf, against those huge bulks, those embodiments of winter lifting their glistening peaks like mountains above the waves, yet reaching down into the depths deeper than their summits are borne aloft, — against all that is icy and cold and petrified in our hearts, I invoke the current of this celestial passion to flow. Oh, pour upon us, thou mighty river, whose source is hidden in the far-off spiritual tropics ! — pour upon us the full tide of thy latent and immeasurable heat, until our hearts are melted and mingled in thy fervid stream. Come nearer to us, thou stream of God ! make short our winters, and prolong our summers ; breathe thy moist warmth into our atmosphere, until the air is sweet and musical with scent of flowers, and voice of tuneful birds.

I put the Lord in his own proper person before you. He speaks : the mystery is no longer mysterious. My hand has found the clew that leads me from the

labyrinth of vain endeavor ; light breaks on the eyes that groped so long in darkness : for he says to me, to you, to all, “ If ye *love* me, ye will keep my commandments.”

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